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A

Fiſh caught in his own Net.

AN

EXAMINATION

Of Nine Sermons, from *Matt.* 16. 18.

Publiſhed laſt Year, by Mr *Joſeph Fiſh* of *Stonington*;

WHEREIN

He labours to prove, that thoſe called *Standing Churches* in *New-England*, are built upon the *Rock*, and upon the ſame Principles with the firſt Fathers of this Country: And that *Separates* and *Baptiſts* are joining with the *Gates of Hell* againſt them.

In Anſwer to which;

Many of his Miſtakes are corrected; The Conſtitution of thoſe Churches opened; the Teſtimonies of Prophets and Apoſtles, and alſo of many of thoſe Fathers are produced, which as plainly condemn his plan, as any Separate or Baptiſt can do.

By ISAAC BACKUS.

Paſtor of a Church of Chriſt in *Middleborough*.

Go thro', go thro' the Gates;—gather out the Stones, Liſt up a Standard for the People. Iſa. 62. 10.

"Separation generally hears ill in the world, and yet there is "a ſeparation ſuitable to the mind of God: He that will "not ſeparate from the world and falſe worſhip is a ſeparate "from Chriſt." Dr. *Owen*: Eſhed. p. 36.

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THE PREFACE.

PEACE is so lovely in itself, and is so essential to happiness, that all would be accounted friends thereto. The direction from above is, seek peace and pursue it; *and the cry from below is* peace, peace! *Yet there is a great and important difference between the two languages; for the divine voice is,* love the TRUTH and peace; *and the way prescribed to promote* union *is,* speaking the TRUTH in love. Zech. 8. 19. Eph. 4. 15. *But the two grand engines to support the contrary cause are* deceit *and* violence. *Which cause the Prince of* peace *came into the world on purpose to destroy; and wherever his* truth *prevails, it breaks up that sort of* peace. *Hence the charge exhibited against one of his greatest ministers, by men of principal note in the world for religion and order, was,* We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition throughout the world. Acts 24. 5. *And it was not only so among the* Jews, *but also in the capital of a* Roman colony; *when the power of truth had cut off the hope of an unlawful scheme of gain, the* magistrates *soon had a complaint laid before them, that,* these men do exceedingly trouble our city. Acts 16. 20.

However, this conduct both in Jews *and* Heathens, *is so plainly exposed in the bible, that the whole* christian world *will condemn it; and who will dare to appear now to plead for a* peace *contrary to* truth? *Instead of that,* truth *is set upon as high a pole among* protestants, *as the* cross *is among the* papists: *and every author that writes, has got the important* word *wrote in some place, where the reader may not fail to see it. Yet there has been such* galling of one another *in* perverse disputes, *and* striving *about this and other* words * *in our day, that some serious people are ready to condemn all* disputing, *as being a principal cause of all the confusions that appear in our nation and land. Tho' if after the confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, with the great perplexities which were produced by many defeats that we met with in the beginning of the late war, any had said,*

we had better be easy *as long as we can, than to oppose the enemy any more; such advice would hardly have passed for good policy, or for a token of true regard to our peace and welfare.*

All rational attempts to remove calamities, are levelled against the causes of them; and as deceit and violence have been the causes of all our woes from the beginning, so a great part of the work of God's servants in all ages has been to point out and expose the deceits of false men; which has often produced what the prophet speaks of, viz. A voice of the howling of the shepherds; *and says he,* my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Zech. 11. 3, 8. *And things of like nature have appeared in our times, but none are willing to be accounted the* idol shepherds; *each one would turn it off to others; and many ministers in our land have been labouring these* 20 *years to fix the odious character upon a number of people who have withdrawn from their societies. Among whom Mr.* Fish *has lately distinguished himself, by attempting to open the* "rise, cause and tendency *of these* "*separations and the errors of the anabaptists,*" *in a volume of about* 200 *pages. This I have been requested by christian friends to write some reply to; but as I have several times, exposed some of my thoughts on these subjects, to the world, I repeatedly told my friends that I thought I had done my part in that way. At length it was urged that many of the first leaders in separation were gone off the stage, and scarce any left that are so fully acquainted with the circumstances and manner of the first separations, as I have been. This argument prevailed so far, that I agreed to take and read the book and act as light might appear. And when I came to read it, no doubt remained whether it ought to be answered or not, tho' the doing of it was far from appearing a pleasing lot to nature. For whatever pleasure it may yield, to appear to the public in matters that are pleasing, or for amusement; yet in* war, *to be distinguished as a mark for every one to shoot at,* that *nature dreads. My unequalness to the task was still a greater difficulty; for tho' it was an easy matter to point out many of Mr.* Fish's *mistakes and inconsistences, so as to render his performance contemptible; to do the subject justice, would be nothing less than to lay open the religious* constitutions *of the whole country, and many* transactions *which deeply affect the characters of many noted men.*

Yet to omit it now, could not be done with a clear conscience; for Mr. F. says, "*If I have in any instance, mis-*

"*taken*

" taken facts, or misrepresented persons or things, I desire it " may be corrected." *Preface p.* And after a long discourse on those things, he says, " The foregoing errors, principles, " and groundless offences which they took, the charge of all " which must lie upon them until they purge themselves." *p.* 164. Therefore to be silent now, would be admitting many things pass for truth, which I know were not so, tho' many others did not know it. Mr. F. tells us he hopes, if there are any mistakes, " it will be looked upon as simple and unde- " signed." To which I would say, I desire always to avoid the evil of judging the counsels of others hearts, and to judge righteously according to what is made manifest. But as he has manifested that he has mistook the rule itself, throughout his book, I leave him and others to consider how simple or undesigned such a mistake can be; or what less can be expected than false actings upon a false rule. Three witnesses are allowed to prove any point, both by divine and human law: and that number shall suffice for the present to prove that he has mistook, and acted contrary to the golden rule in the affair before us,

1. *No man, or community can think it reasonable to have their character drawn only by their* imperfections *without any of their* vertues: *yet Mr.* F. *after a long attempt to draw the separates* " *picture to the life,*" *says,* " Whatever " good things *they have among them, they have them not* as " separates, *but in* common *with other christians. The* " *things that I have told you of above, are their* characteris- ticks." *p.* 160.

2. *None can be willing to have the character of their whole denomination taken from evil persons and things which may be pickt out among them: but in the midst of this labour to draw our picture, he says,* " *I would not here be under-* " *stood to represent them* all *as a man, as advancing and* " uniting *in every* one *of the particulars above-mentioned;* " *but* some *of them held* one, *some* another." *p.* 142.

3. *No man can rationally be willing to be deprived of the liberty of hearing and judging for himself in important matters; nor to be condemned by others without a fair hearing: yet this is the very labour of Mr.* Fish's *whole book; for a principal reason given for his writing it in the first page of his preface is, that* ' *a considerable number, if not the* ' *greater part of his few remaining people, inadvertently fa-* ' *voured the separate teachers so far as to frequent their* ' *meetings.*' *And a special article of advice, in the* conclusion *is* " Go not after them nor follow them.—*How*

" *can*

" *can you, with any good conſcience, after I have ſhewn you* " *from* whence *they aroſe, their* principle, ſpirit *and* ten- " dency." *p.* 191. *Thus his whole driſt appears to be to keep his people from hearing and judging for themſelves. And he has condemned us without a fair hearing: for accounts of our principles and practices have been publiſhed by various hands, and at different times for theſe* 18 *years; yet it does not appear thro' his whole book, that he has paid any regard to them, even ſo much as to point out our miſtakes or inconſiſtencies, (as doubtleſs he might have found ſome ſuch;) but the chief of what he has held forth to the world againſt us, is upon his own bare word.*

I ſuppoſe the chief thing which blinded him in theſe affairs, was a conceit of his good deſign *therein; for ſpeaking of* " *the grievous things*" *which he has written both againſt ſeparates and baptiſts, he ſays,* " *Neither of which ſhould I have* " *meddled with, could I at this day, have ſeen how to plead* " *the cauſe of the* churches *(that our brethren have ſepara-* " *ted from) which I believe to be the cauſe of God, with-* " *out ſhewing the* younger *and reminding the* elder *among* " *my people, how and wherein* this ſacred cauſe *has been* " *injured.*" *Pref. p.* 4. *Now 'tis no new thing for men under a ſtrong conceit that they are engaged in a* good cauſe *to put* good *meanings to* bad *actions of their own, and* bad *meanings to* good *actions of others; yea and to eſteem men's* works *for the* perſons *ſake, inſtead of eſteeming the* perſon *highly for his* work's *ſake. And this temper will prompt men to think that* evil *don't belong to the* ſacred cauſe *that they are in, and that* good *don't belong to the oppoſite party, but are intruders on each hand; and they would attribute the* evil *among themſelves to others, and the good among others to themſelves. And is it not from hence that our author, when he is going to reckon up a catalogue of the* evil *of the times, ſays,* " *If the ſeparates are not the* only *guilty perſons,* " *or not* MORE *guilty than* ſome *that* pretend *to be of the* " ſtanding order, *yet 'tis manifeſt that the following diſ-* " *orders are owing* chiefly *if not* entirely *to the* SEPARA- " TIONS *?*" *p.* 172. *Obſerve, 'tis only* ſome, *and they but* pretenders *to be of the* ſtanding order *who are allowed to be* guilty, *while the real guilt is laid* chiefly *if not* entirely *at the* ſeparates *doors. On the other hand he ſays,* " *I* " *know not of one* principle *or* practice, *among them that is* " *agreeable to the goſpel, but what they learned in* our " churches." *p.* 113. *This is a fine way indeed of treating mankind!*

However

However I truſt it will yet be made manifeſt, that it was what God taught us by his word and ſpirit, of the corruptions *which are allowed, yea and pleaded for to this day, in thoſe churches that cauſed us to ſeparate from them. But as it ſeems beneath the dignity of theſe learned gentlemen to take notice of* laymen's *writings, I would, to help Mr.* F's *eye-ſight a little, juſt point him to one who calls him a* layman *as he does us; and who has got a title as much above him, as he has above us. He has only the title of* reverend, *but one who has the ſhocking title given him of* reverend Father in God, *preached a ſermon on* Feb. 21. 1766. *before the* ſociety *which ſupports the* church miniſters *that are ſent into this country; wherein he declares that* 'PERSECUTION *for* OPINIONS *was the* moſt abominable *of all the errors of the* antichriſtian *church.'* * *And his ſermon abounds with the word* charity, *and he allows that our fathers were driven into this land for* conſcience ſake; *yet ſpeaking expreſsly of thoſe colonies where* preſbyterianiſm *is* eſtabliſhed, *and* remains *in its* ancient PURITY, *he ſays,* "*That very people,* "*whoſe fathers were driven for conſcience ſake into the* "waſte howling wilderneſs, *are now as ready to laugh at* "*the bible, as at their fathers ruffs and collarbands.*" ‖ *Here is a* character *given to the world of Mr.* Fiſh's *churches, by one who ſtands ſo much above them, that he treats them juſt as theſe miniſters do us, namely to* accuſe *without any* proof *but great* ſwelling words *of their own. And this very accuſation from the biſhop, is given as the reaſon of their continuing their labours among us, inſtead of going on to goſpelize the* ſavages, *which he allows to be the original deſign of that* ſociety: ‡ *for he ſays,* "*We might well leave* "*theſe factious people to themſelves, did not a miſerable cir-* "*cumſtance ſtill call for our reſpected* charity, *I mean, the* "*ſpreading of* GENTILISM *in the colonies themſelves.*" †

And if we were to judge by his account it might be thought that ſuch heatheniſm *abounded the moſt in* Connecticut *of any part of the land; for by the liſt of their miſſionaries at the end of the biſhop's ſermon, it appears that they have a* third *more of them there, than in any other colony in* America: *tho' it looks more rational to me to ſuppoſe that the clergy's power being carried to the higheſt pitch there, is the cauſe of it. This prelates conduct in this matter has been juſtly complained of as an open violation of the laws of truth and equity; yet if he were allowed our author's method, to claim all that*

is

* Biſhop of *Glocester's* Sermon before ſaid Society, p. 9.
‖ Page 12, 13. ‡ Page 8. † Page 11.

is good among us to his ſide, becauſe our fathers came out of the church of England *; then he might poſſibly find* ſome *ſuch perſons in* New-England *as he ſpeaks of, tho' likely he might find ten to one of that character in his own* dioceſe.

The common name that his charity prompts him to give diſſenters in that ſermon is fanaticks. *Now I ſuppoſe a proper definition of that name is, that 'tis one who is* puft up *with a* fancy *that he has got ſome* new diſcovery *to make to others. And if ſo, what ſhall we think of the biſhop of* Gloceſter ? *for he gives it in his ſermon as a* new diſcovery *which he had made, that the* ſavages *ought to be* civilized *as well as* chriſtianized ; *and he attributes their little ſucceſs in times paſt, chiefly to the want of knowing, or want of attending to that maxim. Whereas to have told the plain truth, he muſt have informed his honorable audience, that the reaſon why they had done ſo little to chriſtanize the* Indians, *was becauſe they had ſpent almoſt all their labours among the* Engliſh, *and in the moſt* wealthy *places that they could get footing in. And if he could have ſtooped ſo low as to have looked into the life of Mr.* John Eliot *in the laſt century, and the life of Mr.* David Brainerd *in this, he would have found, (that inſtead of a* new diſcovery) *the very* maxim *he ſpeaks of was known and acted upon, both in the paſt and preſent age, by the moſt zealous and moſt ſucceſsful labourers to bring the* Indians *to true chriſtianity, that* America *ever ſaw.*

The biſhop proceeds to charge the coloniſts *with the dreadful crime of yearly* ſtealing ſlaves *from the oppoſite continent, and* ſacrificing *of them* " *to their great idol the* GOD OF " GAIN." *p.* 25. *And he ſays,* " *Nothing is more certain* " *in itſelf, and apparent to all, than that the infamous traf-* " *fic for ſlaves, directly infringes both divine and human law.* " Nature *created man free, and* grace *invites him to aſſert* " *his freedom.*" *p.* 26. *Who then could think but that this great* ſociety *for the* propagation *of the* goſpel, *would ſet all theſe* ſlaves *at* liberty *as faſt as they could ? But behold! The caſe is altered. For governor* Cordington *of* Barbados, *(inſtead of ſetting his ſlaves free) bequeathed a* plantation ſtocked with them *to this* ſociety ; *which now is declared to be a* pious intention *in the* donor, " *God out of this* evil " *(ſays the biſhop) having made us the honored inſtruments* " *of producing* good." *p.* 29. *And the* good *which he talks of is, that while they reap the profits of thoſe* ſlaves, *they would uſe them well, and ſo ſet a* good example *to others : And he ſays,* " *It would be impiety to* ſuſpect *that the ſociety will*

" *will not perſevere in making his uſe of ſo fortunate a* " *circumſtance.*" p. 30.

Here is a glaſs for Mr. F. *to look into. A profeſſed miniſter of Chriſt, at the head of a ſociety, compoſed of the chief* dignitaries of the church, *and of ſeveral lords in the* ſtate, *after exclaiming againſt perſecution,* characteriſeth *the* coloniſts *as* fanatick, factious gentiles, *yearly practiſing the worſt of* heatheniſh, *even the* ſacrificing *of* human *creatures to an* idol; *and this from the ſame mouth that tells of* pious deſigns *in and the proceedings of his* own party, *and that charges it as* impiety, *even to* ſuſpect *their* perſeverance *therein!* * But thinkeſt thou, O man, that judgeſt them that do ſuch things, and doſt the ſame, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God?

Perhaps ſome are ready to cry, who is this, that preſumes to correct biſhops and miniſters at ſuch a rate? Anſwer, he is a perſon of very little note in the learned world, and never was a member of their ſchools. Indeed they have given him a few titles; as ſometimes he has been of a credible family, *and ſo it was wondered at that he would go with ſuch a deſpicable people; yet anon he was pronounced a* young upſtart, *not to be regarded. One ſentence declared him to be a* crafty deceiver; *the next an* honeſt gumphead. *Sometimes 'twas aſſerted that he was purſuing* worldly gain; *and at another time they declared that he had little or nothing for his labour, and ſpent his own eſtate: but* neither ſo did their witneſs agree together.

The truth is, what little he does know, was gained in the ſchool which Dr. Franck *ſpeaks of, where the higheſt wiſdom is, to* know Jeſus Chriſt *and him crucified; and wherein things are taught in an* experimental *way. Hence the reader will find ſeveral leſſons in the enſuing pages, repeated in that manner: and tho' he is not inſenſible that* telling of experience, *is treated with contempt by the faſhionable chriſtians of our day, yet he is not daunted at their ſneers, while he ſees the chief apoſtle of the* circumciſion *taking this method to ſatisfy his brethren; and the great apoſtle of the* Gentiles *doing the ſame before his learned perſecutors, when they were complained of for leaving the* cuſtoms of their fathers, Acts 11. 4,—18. & 22. 1—21. *One ſpecial order of that ſchool is,* "*Have no* " *fellowſhip with the unfruitful* works of darkneſs, *but* " *rather* reprove them. *But all things that are* reproved,

*And all this to move people to contribute money to that Society: yet church-men have as great a hand in the ſlave-trade, as any.

" *are made* manifeſt *by the* light." *This he takes to be a ſufficient warrant for improving a fair opportunity to attempt to hold up light to his fellow-men, and to labour to convince all he can, be they ever ſo much above him, wherein they have miſtook darkneſs for light; and he expects the ſame from others.*

He would be far from repreſenting Mr. Fiſh *as* ſingular *in what he has now publiſhed. No, his ſermons are a proper* ſpecimen *of what has often been delivered from pulpits in our land, for more than* 20 *years; and being perſuaded that many worthy men, both in public and private ſtations, have not known the true ſtate of theſe affairs, therefore the author was induced to enlarge more upon them, than his love of brevity would otherwiſe have permitted. And may we all ſo ſpeak and ſo bear and do, as they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty.*

Middleborough, March 25. 1768.

The Introduction.

Containing some brief Remarks upon the *Characters* which Mr. *Fish* gives of a Church of Christ.

THOSE who desire to bring any controversy to a just issue, will endeavor to hold up what light they can, concerning the merits of the cause, and not amuse or perplex others minds with things foreign from the things in hand: therefore, as Mr. *Fish* begins his preface with this information, that "The special occasion of the following discourses "was, the revival of the spirit and principles of *separation* "and *anabaptism*;" I shall endeavor, according to the light I may be favoured with, to attend closely to these points, and shew wherein the difference between us lies, and the grounds of that difference.

'I heartily concur with him that the *truth* which *Peter* 'confessed, or the person of Christ, of whom this confession 'is made, *is the rock*, upon which Jesus Christ resolves to 'build his church;' and that *Peter* was "one of those *lively* 'stones, or precious materials of that building." page 3. But I can't say so of some of the *characters* which he gives to describe the church of Christ by; the first of which is,

"That Jesus Christ has but one church in the world, "and that it is the *same which it always was*." To explain which he says, "We gentile believers were graffed "in among the Jewish believers, making one church. "As the apostle Paul shews, *Rom.* 11. 17. And the whole "is but the continuation of the same church from the be- "ginning of the world." p. 7. It is readily granted that the *invisible* church is always the same; but that is not what Mr. F. intends; for he has just before said, "I "mean to speak of Christ's *visible Church* upon earth.— "which contains both good and bad, true believers and "nominal." And his *sixth character* of the church is only an explanation of this: which is, that "the church of

" Chriſt has always conſiſted of viſible believing parents " and their children bound together by covenant to be " the Lords." p. 22. And after ſome diſcourſe upon *Abraham's* covenant he ſays, " Hence it appears that believ- " ing parents cannot enter into *that* covenant which God " made with *Abraham*, without taking their children with " them.—They therefore that take God for their God, " but not the God of their ſeed, *equally ſo*; they leave " out *half*, or the *greater part* of the ſubjects of it." p. 24, 25. He adds " If any ſay that this promiſe *To* " *thee and thy ſeed after thee*, under the goſpel, intends " thy *ſeed* or *children* when they are grown up, or be- " come *actual believers*; and not while they are in a ſtate " of infancy, I apprehend the expoſition will not ſtand." And after citing *Deut.* 29. 10, &c. he ſays, " Here you " ſee, that great and ſmall, parents and children, even " little ones, ſtand forth in a body, that they might all " enter into (or renew) covenant with their God.—Which " ſhows that *children*, even *infants* were always reckoned " a part of that *body* or *church*, which the Lord gathered " in Abraham's family." p. 25, 26.

Tis true that this was the conſtitution of the church which was gathered in *Abraham's* family, as appears from verſe 13 which is, *That he may eſtabliſh thee to day for a people unto himſelf, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath ſaid unto thee, and as he hath ſworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob.*

But when Mr. *Fiſh* ſays, " Is it not altogether reaſon- " able to ſuppoſe that the chriſtian church is made up of " the ſame materials that the jewiſh church was?" The anſwer muſt be No, by no means; becauſe God has ſaid the contrary; and 'tis perfect madneſs to ſet up our *ſuppoſitions* and *reaſonings* againſt divine revelation. Now that God has ſaid the contrary, appears from *Jer.* 31. 31, 32. Where he ſays, " Behold, the days come, ſaith the " Lord, that I will make a *new covenant* with the houſe " of *Iſrael*; *not according to the covenant* that I made " with their fathers in the day that I took them by the " hand, to bring them out of the land of *Egypt*." Thoſe who ſtood forth then as a body to enter into covenant, tho' they had ſeen great ſigns and miracles; yet the Lord had not given them an *heart to perceive, eyes to ſee*, nor *ears to hear*, unto that day. But of this new covenant he ſays, " I will put my law in their *inward parts*, and write it in " *their hearts*, and I *will* be their God, and they *ſhall* be

" my

" my people; and they shall *all know me* from the *least* " of them unto the *greatest* of them, saith the Lord." The constitution, priesthood and ordinances of the jewish church, served unto the *example* and *shadow* of heavenly things; but this is a *better* covenant which is established upon *better promises*. That *old* covenant Israel *brake*, and he *regarded them not*: But this *new* covenant is established upon better promises, which are, *I will*, and *they shall*. *Heb.* 8. 5—13.

I cannot imagine that 'tis possible for words to express more plainly than these do, that there is an essential difference between the *materials* as well as the *forms* of the two churches; even the same that there is between shadow and substance, flesh and spirit, type and antitype. All *Abraham's natural* seed were circumcised, and God said, *my covenant shall be in your flesh*; and all his seed in a *gospel* sense have the law written in their *hearts*, and their *sins* shall be *remembered no more*. Heb. 10. 15, 17. Accordingly it was such as *gladly received the word*, and *such as should be saved*, that were *added to the church*, in the apostles times, *Acts* 2. And when some of a contrary character got in, they are said to *creep in unawares*, Gal. 2. 4. Jude 4. Therefore I think we may justly return our author's question, and say, 'Is it not altogether *unreasonable* ' to suppose that the christian church is made up of the ' same materials the jewish church was, since the holy ' Ghost has so plainly declared the contrary?'

Having given a few of my thoughts upon Mr. *Fish's first* mark of a true church; and also of his *sixth* which explained it, I come to his *second*, which is, that the churches " Foundation is one, and ever the same." p. 7. This is strictly true of the invisible church, but the leaders of the visible church when Jesus came, were *builders* who set at nought this glorious *corner-stone*; and he shews that none build on the *Rock* but such as *hear his sayings and do them*, Mat. 7. 24. Faith comes by hearing: and those who hear and believe with their *hearts*, ought to confess with their *mouths*, and obey all Christ's commands, and thus they are *built up for an habitation of God thro' the Spirit*. In this sense I would join with him.

His *third* mark is, that " Christ Jesus was always the head " and king of his church." p. 9. So he is: and I heartily concur with him that our Lord Jesus " has done enough " to make us tremble at the thoughts of attempting any " thing,

" thing, in his houſe and worſhip, which he has not directed " us to do, much more any thing that he has forbidden."

Our authors fourth character is, " Chriſt's church has " always been furniſhed with officers of his appointing." p. 11. Here again we agree in general truths; but when he comes to trace the order down from the beginning, why was his memory ſo ſhort as never to mention the *prophets* in the jewiſh church, while he enlarges upon the caſe of the *prieſts* and *Levites*? Perhaps he might think the latter would beſt agree with his notion of a *line* of *ſucceſſion*; but he may find himſelf miſtaken there. For after the return of the *Jews* from *Babylon*, ſome of the children of the *prieſts*, ſought their *regiſter* among thoſe that were reckoned by *gencalogy*, but they were not found: therefore they were, as *polluted*, *put from the prieſthood*. Ezra 2. 62. Now if the power of ordination is not in the *church*, but is *wholly* committed to the *miniſters* of the churches, as Mr. *F.* expreſly holds (p. 80. 145.) then, according to this plain example, every miniſter who can't produce the *regiſter* of his ordination, as being derived in an *uninterrupted line* down from the apoſtles, he ought as *polluted* to be *put from the* miniſtry. And where will he and his brethren be then?

Indeed he would have us think that they have ſuch a regiſter where the very *names* of ſuch a line is preſerved. p. 18. But it ſeems by the margin that 'tis in *Latin*, and as we are come out of the *Latin* church, we ſhall expect to hear it in *Engliſh* before we believe it. *Paul's charge* is not to give heed to *fables and endleſs genealogies*, which miniſter *queſtions*, rather than *godly edifying*. 1 Tim. 1. 4. And how fully have theſe words been verified in the diſputes which *catholics*, *prelates*, and *presbyters* have had upon this affair theſe many hundred years? and it ſtill miniſters *queſtion* which are as much unreſolved, as when they began the diſpute.

Our author's *fifth* character is, that " The church of " Chriſt is a confederate people, a people in viſible covenant " with God and with one another," p. 19. This is true, and ſo is his *ſeventh*, that 'tis " further known by ſpecial " ordinances which God hath given it," p. 34. Tho' it ought to be remembred that the falſe church hath covenants and ordinances as well as the true, only the true church endeavours to keep to the divine pattern; while the falſe, adds inventions of her own. Theſe are therefore by no means ſo plain marks to diſtinguiſh the true church as his *eighth* and laſt is; viz. that " Chriſt's church has always had,

" and

" and always will have his holy spirit dwelling in it." p. 44. This is a great truth; for if one church as well as person, have not the *Spirit of Christ*, it is *none of his*. Thus I have given a little touch upon the *characteristics* which Mr. F. has given of the church: two of them I think are not true, in the others we agree in general, tho' when we come to apply them the difference between us will more distinctly open in many particulars.

Part. I. The *constitution* which Mr. F. pleads for, opened, and proved to be essentially different from the first churches in this Country.

When Mr. *Fish* comes to apply these characters, he, to prepare the way promiseth several things, the substance of which are, That the rule is perfect, but the best of men are imperfect, so that when they come with honest hearts to apply divine rules, they differ so widely in their opinions upon some modes of worship, as to render it difficult, if not impracticable for them to worship harmoniously together: which shews the necessity as well as grounds of mutal forbearance, and should make us cautious how we give hard names. These are weighty considerations, and if they had continued with due weight upon his mind thro' his following discourses, it would doubtless have prevented my troubling him in the affair; but since it has proved to be otherwise, I will *also give mine opinion*; and then leave it with the reader to judge for himself.

Our author first applies his rules to those which he calls *standing churches*, and he says, " We have sufficient " reason to be comfortably satisfied that these churches " are true churches of Jesus Christ." p. 78. As to their *constitution*, he says, " They are in general of the *congre-* " *gational* way; and altho' in many parts, particularly " in this * colony, they are for mutual benefit, *consociated* " or united together by agreement, yet they remain *con-* " *gregational*, p. 79.

This title, as I understand, is derived from the fathers of this country, therefore we must look there for its true meaning. Now *Cambridge platform* says, the church since the coming of Christ is but only congregational, therefore " neither national, provincial nor classical." National churches have their parishes, for managing the common affairs of their worship, who yet are under the government of the whole: But the plan before us in exact distinction therefrom, has the whole power of church government in each

* Connecticut,

each particular church, "power to open and ſhut, to chuſe "and refuſe, to conſtitute in office, and remove from "office." This is the expreſs meaning of the name, as it is explained by our fathers who gave it: And tho' they freely improved the advice and aſſiſtance of other churches, yet it was as *ſiſters* or *equals*, who ſtill had the whole right of government within each church.

And are the ſtanding churches ſuch? No, Mr. *F.* has not got two pages forward, before he lays down this as the firſt thing which *ought* to be *corrected* in the churches, viz. "The impoſition of hands at the ordaining of elders, "which, ſays he, I apprehend the goſpel has committed "*wholly* to the care of the *preſbytery*, or *miniſters* of the "churches; but is by the indulgent *Cambridge* platform, "diſpoſed of to the *brethren*, at the pleaſure of the "church." p. 80. Thus while he uſurps the name, becauſe 'tis credible, he denies a principal point in its meaning, and directly ſets up a power above the churches; for, if the power of ordination is not *in* the church, then ſhe muſt be beholden to a power *without* her, and ſo *above* her, to give her office-authority. But our fathers had ſeen too much of this ſpiritual tyranny, to be willing to come under it again; and as they knew that the *church of the living God*, is *the pillar and ground of the truth*, * they reſted the matter there, and deſired with *Timothy* to behave as they ought, *in the houſe of God*; but not like *Diotrephes* to love a *pre-eminence over it*. However Mr. *F.* would have it that their *practice* was not agreable to their *principles*, and ſays *Plymouth* church "attempted not to ordain a miniſter merely as a church," of brethren only, with their own hands." p. 84. But Mr. *Prince* who knew as well as he, informs us concerning the firſt church in *Salem*, that on *Aug.* 6. 1629. "They proceeded to *ordain their* miniſters; as alſo Mr. "*Houghton* a ruling elder; being ſeparated to their ſeve-"ral offices by the impoſition of the hands of ſome of the "*brethren* appointed by the church thereto: Governor "*Bradford* and others, as *meſſengers* from the church of "*Plymouth*, being by croſs winds hindred from being pre-"ſent in the former part of the ſervice, came time enough "to give them the *right hand of fellowſhip*." † If any ſay theſe miniſters had been ordained by biſhops before, I anſwer, that they were now *out of that order*, and we are expreſly told that one of them was "*ſilenced* for nonconformity."

* 1 Tim. 3. 15. John 3. 9, 10.

† New-England chronology p. 190, 191.

formity,"* And they did not hold the *indelible character*, but were, as we have just seen, so consistent as to know that "to constitute in office, & remove from office, are acts belonging "ing to the same power," therefore, as they were put *out* of office, by the *same power* that put them *in*, they were now ordained anew. The like was done to Mr. *Wilson* the first minister of *Boston*. Indeed a late honorable historian tells us, concerning him, that "all joined in a protestation that it was not "a renouncing of the ministry he received in *England*, but that "it was a confirmation, in consequence of their election." † Upon which I would desire leave to observe, that none could have reason to think that they renounced his right to improve his ministerial *gift*; but 'tis plain that they judged *this ordination* to be needful to put him into the *office* here. And the same author informs us in the next page, that one distinguishing character of a congregational church is, "That "there is no jurisdiction to which particular churches are "or ought to be subject, by way of authoritative censure, "nor any other *church power*, extrinsical to such churches, "which they ought to depend upon *any other sort of men* "for the exercise of."

Here the point turns: We all hold it proper occasionally to improve the advice and gifts of other churches, while all are equal as to power: but all ministers who think they have a power to impart to another church, which that church has not within itself, and has not a right to exercise without assistance received from abroad; they are not congregational men, let them pretend what they will.

Another great point in the congregational plan is, that the "power to open and shut," is in the church as a body; and therefore that they all ought to hear and judge of the evidence that any give of their right to be received as members. Dr. *Increase Mather* says, "There is *no* "*congregational* man, but he *reports to the church* some-"thing of what the person desiring communion with "them, has related to him; which the *presbyterian* does "not, only declares his own satisfaction, and leaveth the "brethren a liberty to object against their conversation." ‡ And he tells us, that in the declaration of the *faith* and *order* of the *congregational churches* in *England*, given at *Savoy*, Oct. 12. 1658. they declare, ‖ "That the "members

* New-England cronology, Page 182.

† Mr. *Hutchinson*'s history of the *Massachusetts*, vol. I. p. 419.

‡ Mitchel's Life, dedicat. p. 23. ‖ Ibid. p. 24.

" members of particular churches are ſaints by calling, " viſibly manifeſting their obedience to the call of Chriſt, " who being further known to each other, by their con- " feſſion of faith, wrought *in them* by the power of God, " *declared by themſelves*, or otherwiſe manifeſted, conſent " to walk together according to the appointment of " Chriſt." The doctor further ſays, " It is evident, that " the church (and not the officers only) have power " given them by Chriſt to judge who are meet to be *put* " *out* of their communion. Matt. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 12. " Then they muſt needs have the like power as to thoſe " that are to be *taken into* their communion." And is this the way now of the churches Mr. *F.* pleads for? No, I never knew an inſtance in my day, of any who were admitted into any of thoſe churches, by declaring *perſonally the faith wrought in* their ſouls; and a great part of them have now dropt even giving *written relations*.

This leads us down to a third article of difference which is the root of all, namely, the *matter* of a goſpel church. We have already ſeen that Mr. *F.* ſuppoſeth that the " chriſtian church is made up of the ſame *materials* that " the jewiſh church was." But the *Cambridge* platform expreſsly ſays, " The *matter* of a viſible church are ſaints " by calling, 1 Cor. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 1." and that the church " under the law, was *national*, which ſince the coming of " Chriſt is *only congregational*; therefore neither national, " provincial nor claſſical." Yet Mr. *Fiſh* has the face to tell the world that their " churches are, in general, pro- " perly *congregational*." And then goes on to produce the teſtimony of preſident *Oaks* in favour of that plan, as the " higheſt ſtep that has been taken towards *reformation*;" to which he ſays, " The venerable Dr. *Increaſe Mather* " adds the weight of his approbation," p. 80. After which, a long quotation is produced from the doctor in favor of the *college*, from whence almoſt all the churches were ſupplied with miniſters; yet he ſtopt a little too ſhort at laſt; for that venerable author's next words are theſe, viz. " Nor are the churches like to continue *pure golden can-* " *dleſticks*, if the *college*, which ſhould ſupply them, prove *apoſtate*." And in the ſame book, he lets us know what he means by that dreadful name, " The debaſing, ſays " he, the *matter* of particular churches muſt needs corrupt " them. A learned and renowned author (i. e. Dr. *Owen*) " has evidenced that the letting go this principle, that

" particular

" particular churches ought to conſiſt of *regenerate per-*
" *ſons*, brought in the great *apoſtate of the chriſtian church.*
" The way to prevent the like *apoſtacy*, (ſays Dr. *Mather*)
" in theſe churches, is to require an *account* of thoſe that
" offer themſelves to communion therein, concerning the
" *work of God on their ſouls*, as well as concerning their
" knowlege and belief. * And he tells us † that "bleſſed
" Mr. *Mitchel* would frequently aſſert, that if it ſhould paſs
" for current doctrine in *New-England*, that all perſons
" *orthodox in judgment*, as to matters of faith, not *ſcanda-*
" *lous in life*, ought to be admitted to partake of the
" Lord's ſupper, without an examination, concerning the
" *work of ſaving grace in their hearts*, it would be a real
" *apoſtacy* from former principles."

And are miniſters now of theſe ſentiments? A worthy gentleman told me that he ſat a number of years at *Marblehead*, under the miniſtry of ‡ Mr. *Holyoke*, before he was elected preſident of the ſame college that theſe words were directed to; and that his common method of admitting members into the church was without giving them any relation of experiences at all, either verbal or written; and that has now got to be a prevailing cuſtom in many parts of the country. Yet miniſters pretend to ſtand upon the ſame foundation with theſe fathers. But here is a treble teſtimony that they are *apoſtates* therefrom. And Dr. *Increaſe Mather* had ſuch a view of its coming on, that he ſaid in the year 1700, that " If the begun *apoſtacy* ſhould pro-
" ceed as faſt the next thirty years, as it has done the laſt,
" ſurely it will come to that in *New-England*, (except the
" goſpel itſelf depart with the order of it) that the moſt
" conſcientious people therein, will think themſelves con-
" cerned to *gather churches out of churches.*" §

Now we may form ſome judgment how far this apoſtacy had proceeded, when our ſeparation began, more than forty years afterwards, by a ſort of *paſtoral letter*, which all the miniſters in *Windham* county publiſhed againſt us; wherein they ſay, " This notion of a pure church, as ſe-
" parating the converted from the unconverted, is contra-
" ry to the revealed will of God. This is as evident as
" any thing can be by that way of evidence, in divers pa-
" rables of our Savior," p. 20. The firſt parable which they

* Mitchel's life. dedicat. p. 27. & 16. † Ibid. p. 10.
‡ He has been preſident of *Harvard College* this ſo years.
§ See the preface to his vindication of the order of the churches in *New-England*.

they refer us to, is that of the *tares of the field*, in Matt. 13. 24, &c. And they ſay, " Our Savior explains it to " his diſciples, as you ſee from verſe 37. Where he ſays, " *The field is the world*; in which therefore is this king- " dom of heaven. *The good ſeed are the children of the* " *kingdom*; *but the tares are the children of the wicked* " *one*. Both the one and the other are in the kingdom " of heaven which is in this world, i. e. *the viſible church*," p. 21. And after giving their thoughts upon ſeveral other ſcriptures, they ſay, " There are many other " texts which might be urged, and plainly ſhew, that it " is the will of Chriſt, that all thoſe who make an *out-* " *ward credible profeſſion of chriſtianity*, ſhould be admit- " ted into his church, and tho' *unconverted be there* " among the wheat the honorable veſſels, ſo long as he " has a church in the world, that they may be under " proper ordinances for their converſion, and for the " trial of his people, and their uſefulneſs to them, &c." p. 23.

I leave the reader to judge how near this doctrine comes to what Mr. *Mitchel* and other fathers call *apoſtacy*, and alſo how *current* this doctrine has paſt, when the miniſters of a whole county, have publiſhed it to the world; and would only remark here, that they have done like thoſe who formerly made *void* the divine command by their own *traditions*; for as they have contradicted our ſaviour in explaining the parable of the *tares*, and the *field* which he ſays is the *world*, they ſay is the *church*; ſo they have made void his command in this very affair. His command is, *Let both grow together*: but their practice has ſaid, No, they ſhall not; for as ſoon as any appear'd againſt their ſchemes, they would not let them grow, nor enjoy their natural rights. Mr. *Finley*, who has ſince been preſident of *New-Jerſey* college, happened to come in thoſe times to *New-Haven*, and only for his preaching to the ſeparates there, he was taken up by civil officers and carried out of the colony; and thoſe who belong'd among us, that ventured publickly to improve their gifts without the miniſters licence, were not ſuffered to enjoy *worldly* privileges, but were taken up one after another, and caſt into priſon. Yea, theſe very men who cried ſo loud for *Peace*, yet *prepared* ſuch *war againſt* thoſe who would not *put into their mouths*, * as not only to load them with ſlander and reproach, but alſo to ſend their ſervants, and take away their goods by *force* † This was done in many places, till the practice

* Micah 3. 5. † 1 Sam. 2. 16.

practice became ſo odious that none would buy ſuch goods; and then they took to ſeizing their perſons. I have an account before me of no leſs than *eleven* perſons who were ſeized thus and carried to jail in *Norwich* only in 3 months, after *June* 17, 1752. one of which was a *widow* 54 years old who belonged to another church, where ſhe attended, and did her part towards the ſupport of divine worſhip, according to her conſcience, and had no concern with the pariſh miniſter; therefore ſhe did not think that the rate which was demanded for him was juſt: yet for her refuſing to pay it, ſhe was taken, and, tho' a weakly woman was carried to priſon in a dark rainy night. One told them then that it look'd like the *works of darkneſs*. But the chriſtian character ſhe bore, and the chriſtian temper which ſhe and others then diſcovered, greatly weakened the cauſe they deſigned to promote hereby.

Not long after, a gentleman in the ſame place was impriſoned for the ſame cauſe, while he ſtood a repreſentative for the town, in the general court. About the ſame time a ſingle woman of a good character, in *Raynham*, was confined more than 12 months in *Taunton* goal, which the miniſter might have prevented by croſſing out, only an *eight penny* rate. At length the evidence ſhe gave of true *conſcientiouſneſs* in the matter, cauſed ſuch uneaſineſs among that miniſter's own people, that they raiſed money and went and ſet her at liberty. This is but a little ſketch of what has been done of that nature, in various parts of our land.

If any ſay, Why are theſe odious things publiſhed now? I anſwer, *Is there not a cauſe?* When the *Jeſuits* complained a few years ago to the king of *Spain* that many things were publiſhed againſt them, and deſired him to forbid it; his reply was, "The way not to have faults pub-"liſhed, is *not to commit them.*" Theſe are often called, *ſtanding churches*; therefore one deſign of this is to ſhew what they *ſtand upon*; even the ſame that other *national* or *provincial* churches do——*civil authority*. Hence, how often do they tell us, "That if it were not for the ſupport of the civil power, their churches would ſoon be broken up?" And an author of great note hath lately told the world that, "After all that may be ſaid in favour of "the *conſtitution*, the *ſtrength* of it lay in the union de-"clared with the civil authority." * And he gives us an inſtance of what the authority did to preſerve order more than a 100 years ago. He ſays, † "In 1653 the general court

* Mr. *Hutchinſon's* hiſtory of the *Maſſachuſetts*, p. 434.
† Ibid. p. 188.

court reſtrain'd " the north church in *Boſton*, from call-
" ing Mr. *Powell* to be their miniſter, who had the cha-
" racter of a *well gifted*, tho' illiterate man." And about the ſame time he tells us, " They laid a large fine " upon the church at *Malden* for chuſing a miniſter " without the conſent and approbation of the neighbour-" ing churches, and allowance of the magiſtrates." And " he ſays Mr. *Hubbard* obſerved upon that occaſion that, " All men are naturally ſo wedded to their own apprehen-" ſions that unleſs there be a *coercive power* to reſtrain, the " order and rule of the goſpel will not be attended."

I am much obliged to his Honor for the ingenuous account which he has given us of former times: yet I ſhall take the liberty to ſay, that if he was not unawares, a little *wedded* to his own apprehenſions, I hardly think he would have called this, a *juſt obſervation*; for elſewhere, ſpeaking of the teſts which had been impoſed by authority in both Englands to produce *uniformity in religion*, he ſays, " Both the one and the other muſt have occaſioned much " *formality* and *hypocriſy*. The myſteries of our holy religi-" on have been *proſtituted* to mere *ſecular views and advan-" tages*." * Now the *teſt* refer'd to, reſtrained *civil freemen* from chuſing any into civil offices, who were not church members; and is it not as bad to reſtrain the *Lord's freemen* from chuſing any into office in his church, who have not been members of human ſchools of learning?

" The experience of all reformed churches," is appealed to for proof, that this *coercive* power is needful to keep the *order of the goſpel*: but the ſame appeal might more juſtly be made, to prove that the clergy, when *thus* ſupported, have been the moſt tyrannical of all men; which has often ſerved to harden infidels againſt all goſpel preachers. A plain reaſon why ſuch men have been the moſt tyrannical, is becauſe they claim authority more immediately from the *higher* power, than others do. Tho' civil authority is of divine appointment, as well as eccleſiaſtical; yet the higheſt civil rulers know, that they are ſet up and ſupported by men, while the others claim a commiſſion from God. Hence they have often aſſumed authority over the very rulers that ſet them up.

And ſince we are often repreſented as *rebels*; † I will

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* Ibid. p. 431.

† Mr. *Lord* who has been a miniſter in *Norwich*, the place of my nativity, above fifty years, expreſly compares our ſeparation to

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a little further lay open my views of this affair; which are, that, as civil rulers ought to be men fearing God, and hating covetousness, and to be terrors to evil doers, and a praise to them who do well; and as ministers ought to pray for rulers, and to teach the people to be subject to them; So there may and ought to be a sweet harmony between them; yet as there is a great difference between the nature of their work, they never ought to have *such a union* together, as was described above.

For, 1. The holy ghost calls the orders and laws of civil states *ordinances of man*, 1 Pet. 2. 13. But all the rules and orders of divine worship are *ordinances of God*; and it *defiles the earth under* its *inhabitants*, when these *laws* are *transgressed*, and *ordinances changed*, Isa. 24. 5. And one of his laws is, "As EVERY man hath received "the *gift*, *even so* minister the same one to another, as "good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If *any* "*man speak*, let him speak as the oracles of God; if *any* "*man minister*, let him do it of the *ability* which GOD "GIVETH: that GOD *in all things may be glorified thro'* "*Jesus Christ*." 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. But this holy and order has been so much *changed* in our land, that churches have not looked so much at the *ability* which *God* has *given*; as to the *titles* which *man* has *bestowed*. I say *titles*, for many of their ministers have not *gifts* to deliver a sermon without *reading*; notwithstanding their *name* of being *learned* men. And yet it is called, the "order of the gos-"pel," now, to have such men as *persons in admiration* so as not to chuse any others into the ministry, *lest man's glory should be brought down*, while we are represented as proud rebels, for not owning them as such.

2. The civil magistrates work is, to promote order and peace among men, in their moral behaviour towards each other, so that every person among all denominations who doth *that which is good* may *have praise of the same*; and and that all contrary behaviour may be restrained, or forcibly

a rebellion in the STATE, Sermon at Mr. *Hart's* ordination, p. 18. And he with six other ministers as plainly compared us to *Core* and his company, in their preface to Mr. *Dickinson's* dialogue, p. 7. Now observe *Core* raised a *rebellion* in *Israel*, where ruler, priest and laws were appointed immediately from heaven; and where the church was *national*: yet it has been the constant method of these, who pretend to be *congregational* men, for these 20 years, to compare us to *Core*, which naturally implies, that they think themselves to be like *Moses* and *Aaron*.

forcibly puniſhed. And as all ſorts of men are members of civil ſociety, and partake of the benefits of ſuch government, therefore they ought to be *ſubject*, and pay *tribute* to rulers. Rom. 13. 1—6. But the work of goſpel miniſters is to labour to *open* mens *eyes*, and to *turn them from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* Acts. 26. 18. And as any kind of *force* tends to ſhut the eyes rather than open them; therefore Chriſt's ſpecial orders to his firſt miniſters were, *Freely ye have received, freely give. And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that houſe, or city, ſhake off the duſt of your feet,* Mat. 10. 8, 14. This ſhould be a *teſtimony* againſt them, that Chriſt's miniſters had not forcibly taken from them ſo much as the duſt of their city, Luk. 9. 5.

But we have a ſet of men in our day, who profeſs to be Chriſt's *ambaſſadors*, and yet they act ſo contrary to theſe *orders*, that if they once can get footing in a town or pariſh, let people diſlike them ever ſo much, they will not go out without a conſiderable quantity of white or yellow *duſt*. Yea, we have had ſeveral inſtances, wherein both church and ſociety have been wearied out with theſe men, and have voted them out of their meeting-houſe, and yet where a little number would follow them, they have held meeting in their own houſe for months or years, and then have applied to the powers which theſe churches *ſtand upon*, and they have *forced* the whole pariſh to pay the miniſter for all that time. And one miniſter has lately found out, that for any to come and profeſs to "preach the "goſpel *freely, without being chargeable to their hearers*; "is ſo far from being an evidence that they are the *true* "*miniſters* of Jeſus Chriſt, and *ſent by* him, that 'tis (*extraordinaries excepted*) an argument why they ſhould "be ſuſpected," *

This

* Mr. *Fiſh* page 63. 65. *Extraordinary*, is a great word, and great things are done by it. The power of Chriſt in *qualifying* men for the miniſtry, without going to *colleges* for them, is hereby limited to the apoſtles days; and all are rejected with contempt by Mr. *F.* who do not now receive their *gifts* at *college*, and their *authority* from "authorized hands," p. 15,—17. And theſe "authorized hands," by the help of this word have got ſuch an *extraordinary* power as the apoſtles never had. For the apoſtles were only *witneſs* for Chriſt, and as ſuch pointed out to the church, what qualifications officers ſhould have, and ſaid, *Brethren look ye out among you* ſuch men, Act. 8, & 6. 3. But

theſe

This is indeed an extraordinary diſcovery, and he ſeems not a little pleaſed with it. And it muſt be acknowleged that if this be a true diſcovery, we are in a deplorable caſe; for we uſed to think the goſpel's being *preached to the poor*, was a convincing evidence that the Meſſiah is come, (Mat. 11. 5.) And if it is not ſo, we have been hitherto deluded, and muſt look out for new teachings, if not for a new bible.

However we will endeavor to ſearch our old bible a little more before we part with it. The paſſage which our author attempts to draw this new diſcovery from, is 2 Cor. 11, 12. Now a material point, in order to come at the meaning of the text, is to know what thoſe falſe apoſtles *gloried in*. Our author ſuppoſeth that they gloried in preaching freely without taking any thing for it: but in v. 20. ſpeaking of the ſame perſons, *Paul* ſays, *Ye ſuffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himſelf.* The clauſe, *take of you*; Dr. *Gill* ſays, the *Arabic* verſion reads, "Took "away their goods from them by *force*." This they did to *exalt themſelves*: and if we look back to the foregoing chapter, we ſhall find, that the ways of theſe teachers, was to *commend themſelves*, and deſpiſe the apoſtle: *His bodily preſence, ſay they, is weak, and his ſpeech contemptible.* When he firſt appeared among that people, he *wrought at tent-making*, on week days, and *reaſoned in the ſynagogue every ſabbath.* * And his *preaching was not with enticing words of mans wiſdom.* † Therefore they deſpiſed him, and commended themſelves, as being men who made a much better appearance, and taught in a more agreable manner than the *tent-maker* did: but ſays he, *Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?* ‖—It was a ſpecial command of our Lord, *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* And he gives this rule to judge by, namely, *He that ſpeaketh of himſelf, ſeeketh his own glory: but he that ſeeketh* HIS *glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs in him.* §

This is the rule to try all teachers by. The occaſion of its being given was, the different opinions that people

had

theſe pretended ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, aſſume a power to limit the church, in her choice to ſuch as they have *approbated*; which I truſt will be made evident to be a power which the apoſtles never had.

* Acts 18. 3, 4. † 1 Cor. 2. 4. ‖ 2 Cor. 10. 7, 10.
§ John 7. 18, 24.

had concerning the teacher of teachers, some saying, *He is a good man*, others saying, *Nay; but he deceiveth the people*: and a particular difficulty which labored in their minds concerning him, was, that he had *never learned letters* in their way. * Therefore he says, judge not according to the *appearance*; yet this rule was not attended to among the *Corinthians*; and instead of it, those teachers who despised the apostle, *measured themselves by themselves, and compared themselves among themselves*: but he durst not *make himself of their number*. † These things shew what those teachers *gloried* in. And *Paul* declares his *godly jealousy* over the *Corinthians*, in the beginning of this 11th chapter; and his fear lest their minds should be *corrupted* from the *simplicity that is in Christ*. Therefore to prevent their being further imposed upon, (tho' it be folly for a man to *commend* himself, yet) he would *answer a fool according to his folly*, to prevent their being *wise in their own conceits*. And he sets out to compare notes with them; and says, *I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles*. And as to the low appearance which he made among them, he asks; *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself, that you may be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God freely?* And proceeds to shew how he had received support from other churches *to do them service*: and he takes a solemn oath, that *no man* in their *regions* should stop him of this boasting; not because he did not love them; But, says he, what *I do, I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we*: for *such are false apostles &c.* Now if they had gloried in preaching for nothing, 'tis certain from v. 20. that the *Corinthians* knew that they practised the contrary; and *Paul* would not have said,—*even as we*, to that. Wherefore Dr. *Gill* ‡ thinks his meaning is, "That these men were desirous that he would take "wages, because they did; that in this respect he might "not excel them, and that they might be able to plead "his example and authority, and so get an occasion of ex- "torting more money from the *Corinthians*: wherefore "to *cut off* all such *occasion* from them, the apostle resolves "to take nothing himself; that whereas they boasted they "were equal to, or superior to the apostles, they might "*be*

* verse 12. 15. † 2 Cor. 10. 12.

‡ Exposition of the new-testament, vol. 2. p. 765.

" *be found*, would they follow their example, *even as they*, " not taking any money at all of them, and poor, *working with their own hands.*"

I cannot find the leaſt account of their glorying in preaching without wages; but I have ſhown ſomething of what they did glory in: and the apoſtle proceeds further and ſays, *I ſpeak fooliſhly; are they Hebrews? ſo am I: are they Iſraelites? ſo am I: are they the ſeed of Abraham? ſo am I; are they miniſters of Chriſt? I am more.* Thus he ſhews that as to outward appearance he could vie with them; while in real ſervices and ſufferings for Chriſt, he vaſtly exceeded them. Yea, while theſe had taken much from that church only for a *ſhew* of ſervice, he had done them much *real* ſervice without taking any thing at all of them.

I ſhall cloſe this head with this remark; that while Mr. *F.* ſeems pleaſed with what he tho't could do great execution againſt us, he has unawares involved himſelf in a *dilemma*: for if the caſe be as I have repreſented, he ſtands a fair chance of falling among falſe teachers: but if my ſenſe of the text be right, he ſhews a want of *Paul*'s temper, and inſtead of cutting off occaſion of being called a hireling, he ſtill pleads up for that ſcheme, which often exacts wages from ſuch as receive no ſervice from them, inſtead of doing real ſervice without wages as *Paul* did. At the ſame time he endeavors artfully to blend a *free* ſupport to miniſters, and a *forced* one together; whereas there is as much difference between them, as there is between the power of truth in the mind, and the power of the civil ſword on the body. The firſt is abundantly clear in ſcripture, the other has no warrant there.

3. Another difference between civil and eccleſiaſtical goverment is, that civil ſtates if large, have various degrees of offices one above another, who receive their authority thro' many hands, down from the head, and that often, more according to eſtate or favor, than merit: but 'tis the reverſe in Chriſt's kingdom; he forbid the firſt motions of this in his diſciples, and expreſsly told them that it *ſhould not be ſo* among them, as it was in earthly ſtates. *Mark* 10. 43. *Luk.* 22. 26. An obvious reaſon of this difference is, that an earthly king cannot in perſon ſee, to what little that is done in his kingdom, and therefore muſt truſt others to manage affairs for him in his abſence; but Zion's King is preſent every where, and ſees to all that is done, and tells every church, *I know thy works*: and he takes care that the faithful are ſupported and rewarded, and that the unfaithful are corrected or puniſhed. If civil officers are

reſiſted or abuſed, 'tis found neceſſary, in order to maintain the dignity of government, to inflict corporal puniſhment on the offenders, if within the ſtate, and to take up the ſword againſt abuſes from abroad. And I ſuppoſe it is a true maxim, that "civil government and a defenſive "war will ſtand or fall together." Hence Jeſus ſaid, *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* Joh. 18. 36. Therefore the dignity of his government is maintained, not by *carnal*, but by *ſpiritual* weapons: and not by *reſiſting*, but patiently *bearing* evil treatment. Hence when one of his chief officers was greatly abuſed he ſaid, *Being reviled, we bleſs: being perſecuted, we ſuffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made the filth of the world, and are the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.* 1 Cor. 4. 12. 13. And the way in which the ſaints finally obtain victory over the *dragon* and *his angels* is, *by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their teſtimony; and not loving their lives unto the death.* Rev. 12. 11.

I have been the more particular on theſe things, becauſe the core of our difficulties lies here. And if the kind reader finds here but an imperfect deſcription of the way of the churches acting upon truth, in diſtinction from all earthly powers, let him remember that this is a *high-way* that has been very much *unoccupied* in later ages, and men have gone in *by-ways*: but 'tis hoped that this *good old way* will ſpeedily be opened ſo plainly that *fools ſhall not err therein*: and if this weak attempt may be owned as any means thereof, that will over-balance all the world's reproaches on that account. The confounding of civil and eccleſiaſtical affairs together has done amazing miſchief in the world: and as Dr. *Cotton Mather* obſerves "The reforming churches flying from *Rome*, carried ſome "of them more, ſome of them leſs, all of them ſomething "of *Rome*, with them, eſpecially in that ſpirit of impoſi-"tion and perſecution, which has too much cleaved unto "them all." This was the worſt miſtake that our fathers brought with them to this land; & tho' their poſterity will generally explode thoſe bitter *fruits*; yet few of them ſeem to be ſenſible of the *root* from whence they ſprang. What our Lord ſaid of ſerving two maſters, may in ſome ſenſe be applied to the joining of theſe two powers together; one or the other will carry the day, and they have each had their turns in our land. Under the old *Maſſa-*

chuſetts

chuſetts charter, none could be ſo much as *freemen* in the ſtate, till they were members of the church; and ſuch as afterwards fell under church-cenſure were not allowed to ſit in the court. And ſtruggles on theſe points were a principal cauſe of looſing that charter. But now the ſcale is ſo far turned, that 'tis a profeſſed rule with many miniſters, not to deal with any perſon in the church for moral evil, 'till they are convicted in the ſtate. A great turn indeed!

As nearneſs tends to beget likeneſs, ſo there have been ſeveral attempts made in our land, to eſtabliſh various degrees of power, in eccleſiaſtical, as there is in civil rule. This was tried for above ſixty years ago in the *Maſſachuſetts* province; but it was prevented there; yet Mr. *Saltonſtal* who had quitted the pulpit in *New-London* for the governors chair in *Connecticut* colony, brought in the ſcheme there ſoon after for a claſſicial power in each county, that men might appeal to, as they do from an inferior to a ſuperior court! and after much contention it was eſtabliſhed by law; only with this reſerve, That as many as would, might diſſent from it. My honoured grandfather, *Joſeph Backus* Eſq; with the other repreſentative from *Norwich*, ſoon felt the effect of this new power; for as they had thought it duty to oppoſe it in the court, ſo they did alſo in the church. But Mr. *Woodward* the miniſter was reſolute to bring in the ſcheme there, and got a majority on his ſide; therefore rather than come under ſuch a yoke, they, with a conſiderable part of the church withdrew, and held a ſeparate meeting three months; and then the miniſter conſented to have the matter tried by a council, tho' in the mean time he had laid them under *church cenſure*; an account of which being conveyed to the general *court*, the repreſentatives were not ſuffered to ſit therein. Such were the early effects of this new power. However, after many councils and much fatigue, *a ſum of money* prevailed with that miniſter to quit his place, * and the church in *Norwich* reſolved to continue upon their old platform.

Theſe and ſuch-like things prevented that new plan, called *Saybrook regulation*, from taking ſo deep effect as many intended it ſhould; yet they obtained one great article of power thereby, which they have generally held ever ſince, and that is the *licencing of candidates for the miniſtry*,

* And rarely can any ſociety now, get rid of a bad miniſter, but *by that means*.

ſtry, and ſo *limiting* the churches to ſuch in their choice of paſtors. Yea this ſpiritual court has attempted to deprive churches of their paſtors who were already in office: one notable inſtance whereof, I will mention. In the beginning of our glorious revival of religion in the land, *New-Haven* conſociation made ſome laws againſt miniſters preaching in others pariſhes, if they were deſired to the contrary: † ſoon after which, Mr. *Philemon Robbins* of *Branford*, (who was a great friend to that work of God) received a letter from the paſtor of a *Baptiſt* church in *Wallingford*, which informed him that tho' they were of different ſentiments about the *form* of religion, yet as they agreed in the *eſſentials*, they deſired him to come and preach among them. This he thought to be a reaſonable requeſt, and therefore appointed a meeting among them in the beginning of the year 1742. But before the appointed time came, he received two letters, one from ſome of the inhabitants of that town, the other from ſome neighbouring miniſters, which informed him that they did not think it would be for the beſt for him to preach among that people, and deſired he would not; but gave no reaſon at all. Yet becauſe he would not put by a meeting which he had appointed merely at their requeſt, without any reaſon given, he was firſt excluded from the *conſociation*, and then complaints were received there againſt him, from a few of his diſaffected people; upon which he made an attempt to get reconciled again to the miniſters, but found it could not be done upon any lower terms, than confeſſing that he did wrong in preaching to that *baptiſt* ſociety as he did. *That* he could not in conſcience do; ſo they parted, which opened a wider door for complaints than before, and ſo many were carried in, that a conſociation was appointed in his own town to try the caſe, and a citation was ſent to him to come and anſwer to many articles.

Hereupon Mr. *Robbins* called his church together, and laid theſe articles before them, with anſwers thereto; and the church manifeſted ſatisfaction therewith: and as they found that the church was originally ſettled according to *Cambridge platform*, and had never voted an alteration; they now voted to abide by their old conſtitution, and appointed Mr. *Robbins* and others to go and inform the conſociation that they denied their juriſdiction, and would not be tried by them. This was accordingly done; yet this *ſpiritual*

† Laws of the ſame nature were ſoon after carried into the general court and paſſed there.

spiritual court declared that they had jurisdiction of the case, and went on to hear and try charges against him, without any to answer for him; and drew up and published their judgment that "Mr. *Robbins* was criminally "guilty of the breach of the *third* the *fifth* and *ninth* "commands, and *many gospel rules*," and so warned all to beware of him, 'till he made satisfaction therefor. Mr. *Robbins*, having copies of these proceedings, published them to the world, in 1747. Afterward four of the inhabitants of *Branford* (if I remember right their number) went to the general court with a complaint that the town still held this condemned man for their minister, and prayed the court to turn him out of his place. This caused a great turn in the rulers minds: and I know not who will now appear to justify their conduct; and yet I fear there are but few who are convinced that the root of all this mischief lies in mans trying to model church affairs according to worldly rule. In civil states particular men are invested with authority to judge for the whole: but in Christ's kingdom each one has an equal right to judge for himself. Indeed there is a likeness in this respect, that all politic bodies have their limits and their power extends only to those within their bounds; but then the limits of civil jurisdiction is fixed by earthly power, and that of the church is only by voluntary consent; for Christ will have no pressed soldiers in his army.

Paul said to the church of Corinth, *What have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among your selves that wicked person.* And after they had proceeded according to this direction, he calls it, a *punishment which was inflicted of many*, 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13. 2 Cor. 2. 6. Now Christ's church is either *particular*, or *universal*. All the churches that are described in the bible, as having the power of discipline are *particular*, in which each member has his right to judge; as in this at *Corinth*, another at *Ephesus*, &c. The affair recorded in Acts 15, is only of one particular church which sent to another for advice in a controversy concerning principles; and the *apostles and elders*, with the *whole church* returned an answer accordingly. But now when men assume a power above particular churches; as they have neither divine rule to support their conduct, nor earthly

power

power to compel others to come to their bar: therefore they are obliged to act contrary both to ſcripture and reaſon.

I have been thus particular, not to injure any man's perſon, but only to open the nature of that conſtitution in order to ſhew the true cauſe of our ſeparation therefrom. It was obſerved long ago, that *facts* are *ſtubborn things*, and can't be altered to ſuit men's notions or intereſt: and having ſhewn from facts what the conſtitution of thoſe called *ſtanding churches* is, viz. that in general they are *national* or *provincial*, and in *Connecticut*, *claſſical*; I ſhall come on to open facts concerning our ſeparation. *

PART II.

The cauſe and manner of our ſeparation, with the particular points of difference between us and the ſtanding miniſters.

I Fully agree with Mr. *Fiſh*, that about 26 years ago, "There was the moſt wonderful work "of God, that ever was known in this part of "the world, both for the extent and viſible "appearance of it." p. 114. I am alſo of his mind, that "there was a marvellous mixture of almoſt eve-"ry thing *good* and *bad*,—for while the ſpirit of God "wrought *powerfully*, ſatan raged *maliciouſly*, and acted "his old ſubtle part to *deceive*." p. 115. And ſeveral of his obſervations concerning Mr. *James Davenport* I believe are juſt, but others I think are not ſo.

He muſt be a great ſtranger to the bible, who does not know that in times of great declenſion, teachers are generally as much, if not the moſt corrupt of any; therefore in a reformation, thoſe corruptions are always more or leſs expoſed, and warned againſt. And when Mr. *Davenport* had his eyes opened to ſee the dreadful caſe of miniſters as well as people, he having been trained up among miniſters who claimed moſt of the power to themſelves, was more eaſily led to the extream, of openly declaring of his judgment concerning ſeveral miniſters, and ſo of calling people

* Mr. *Fiſh* treats of the *baptiſts* before the *ſeparates*; but as that inverts the order wherein providence has carried on the work, I ſhall not follow him therein.

ple to separate from them, because *he judged* them to be unconverted. And a number of separations were produced by that means; but those separations were not from the general constitution of the churches; they were only from particular ministers. Whereas our separation is began several years afterwards, and upon quite different principles; yet Mr. *Fish* would lay them all at his door, while he speaks highly of Mr. *Gilbert Tennant*, who travelled and preached in the most noted places in *New-England*, in the beginning of that work.

But did Mr. *F.* never see the sermon on the *danger of an unconverted ministry*, which that "son of thunder," as he calls him, published soon after, from Matt. 16. 34? wherein, after drawing the character of Pharisee-teachers, and shewing how people should be pitied, who have such teachers, he says, "If it be so,—then what a fearful and "scene of mourning and lamentation, and woe is opened! "because of the swarms of locusts, the crowds of Pha- "risees, that have as *covetously* as *cruelly*, crept into the "ministry, in this adulterous generation! who so nearly "resemble the character given of the old Pharisees, in the "doctrinal part of this discourse, as one crow's egg does "another. It is true some of the modern Pharisees have "learned to prate a little more *orthodoxly* about the new "birth, than their predecessors *Nicodemus*, who are, in the "mean time, as great strangers to the feeling experience "of it, as he. They are blind who see not this to be the "case of the *body* of the clergy, of this generation.—— "Alas! is not it the case of multitudes? If they can get "one, that has the name of a minister, with a band, and "a black coat or gown, to carry on a sabbath days a- "mong them, altho' never so coldly and *insuccessfully*; "if he is free from gross crimes in practice, and takes good "care to keep at a distance from their consciences, and "is never troubled about his insuccessfulness; O! think "the poor fools, that is a fine man indeed." p. 11, 12. It must be confest that his language is sharp and cutting, like *Luther's* formerly; yet many of his reasonings are weighty; of which at present I will only give two extracts more; one is in his answer to that complaint, that his principles will cause contentions among people; to which he says, "The proper cause of sinful divisions, is that "enmity against God, and holiness, which is in the hearts "of natural men, of every order; being stirred up by the "devil, and their own proud and selfish lusts. And very

" often natural men which are the proper cauſes of the " diviſions aforeſaid, are wont to deal with God's ſer- " vants, as *Potiphar's* wife did by *Joſeph*; they lay all the " blame of their own wickedneſs at their doors, and make " a loud cry!" p. 16. The other extract is in anſwer to a ſaying which we have often heard, viz. That 'tis a mere fiction to tell of getting good when we go over the pariſh line, becauſe as they ſay, *we are out of God's way.*

To this Mr. *Tennant* anſwers, " That there are three " monſtrous ingredients in the objection, namely a begging " of the queſtion in debate, raſh judging, and limiting of " God." p. 18 They beg the queſtion who ſuppoſe we go out of God's way, becauſe we go over man's line: and how raſh is it to judge that others get no good, only becauſe they don't go in their way? And ſuch are much more inexcuſable than the *Jews* were, if they think to limit divine bleſſings to any particular *houſe* or ſpot of ground. Now Mr. *F.* ought to know that we read and conſidered theſe things in thoſe times, as well as what Mr. *Davenport* ſaid: yea, and ſo we did the writings of a divine of greater note than either of theſe, who in thoſe times ſaid, "We that are " miniſters, by looking on this work, from year to year, " with a diſpleaſed countenance ſhall effectually keep the " ſheep from their paſture, inſtead of doing the part of " ſhepherds to them, by feeding them; and our people had " a *great deal better* be without any ſettled miniſter at all, " at ſuch a day as this." * And in the next page he obſerves that " The times of Chriſt's remarkably appearing, " in behalf of his church, and to revive religion, and ad- " vance his kingdom in the world, are often ſpoken in the " prophecies of ſcripture, as times wherein he will remark- " ably execute judgments on ſuch miniſters or ſhepherds, " as don't feed the flock, but hinder their being fed, and " ſo *deliver his flock from them*, as Jer. 23d. throughout, " and Ezek. 34. &c."

Theſe things we knew had much of reality in them, and Mr. *F.* or his bretheren might as well undertake to prove, that *deep waters* are good to drink, when they are *foul'd* with *mud* and *dung*; or that it is good feeding in paſtures which are *all trodden down*, as to prove that a great part of the preaching which we had in thoſe days was *clear goſpel*, or *good food* for ſouls. Sheep which are not unruly, will try hard to get food out of neighbouring paſtures, rather than ſtarve in ſuch barren places; and if they are *puſh'd* and

* Mr. *Edward's* thoughts on the work, 1742. p. 134.

and beat for it, that will *scatter them abroad* more. And I speak as I expect to answer it before HIM who has said, he will *judge between the fat and lean cattle*. I know this to be a real cause of our separations: and the evidence of its being so, will more and more open as we go on.

The same views of a *holy God*, which gave many to see their woful polluted and undone condition, led them also to see that they dwelt in the *midst of a people of unclean lips*. Isa. 6. 5. And when any had a manifestation of Christ to their souls; like the woman of Samaria, they wanted to invite all to come and partake of the same blessings: but this gave offence to many, who would say, "You must not "judge." But that was so far from preventing, that it naturally produced a judgment in young converts, that those who were offended at such free invitations, were strangers to vital religion: and doubtless many exceeded the bounds in that way; yet to be more severely dealt with therefor, than others were for the vilest crimes, (as many were) this had no tendency to convince them that they were wrong, or their reprovers right.

Farther, such as had an appetite given them for the pure gospel, could not help seeking often to hear the *sincere milk of the word*; and consequently to hear it from the cleareſt preachers, if they went a few miles further for it. They also *frequently assembled themselves together*, and *exhorted one another*, with mutual advantage; 'till at length some were ready to say concerning some exhorters, much as the women sang concerning a youth in *Israel*, 1 Sam. 18. 7. To this Mr. *F.* bears me witness, p. 138. But great offence was taken at such things, and at length the ministers in general came into an agreement to try to stop them; and now a great part of the preaching that was to be heard at home or abroad, was concerning *imprudencies* and *disorders*, and especially against, what they called, *lay-exhorting*. Our author owns that these things were *frequently*, and perhaps *too often* handled, p. 142. Yet because people could not patiently hear such preaching he says, "Sound doctrine "was what they could not endure." Tho' I am glad he is so honest as to add, that he means "only such branches "of doctrine, as took away (what he calls) *false notions* "in religion;—for, says he, as to many other sound "doctrines, they relished them well." p. 163.

I am far from thinking that we were free from mistakes, and false notions in those times: *Who can understand all his errors?*

But miniſters ought to know that there is a vaſt difference between *living perſons*, and a *dead image*, which the workman *hews*, or *hammers* into what ſhape he pleaſeth: yet becauſe we would not be cut and hammered into their ſhape, we have been treated as rebels ever ſince. Mr. *Fiſh* would have it, that when we turned from them, we ſet up teachers who were "exceeding *raw* and *unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs*," p. 119, 170. Which may lead us to conſider the particular grounds of our ſeparation, and of the difference between us.

I. Of judging others.

THIS has been much complained of in our day, and Mr. *F.* delivers high charges againſt us in that reſpect: but a calm view of his and others conduct on that head, might cauſe the ſame remark about *judging*, that biſhop *Burnet* made concerning *perſecution*, viz. that it look'd as if 'the only 'quarrel they had againſt it was, becauſe they had not 'the managing of it themſelves.' Our author tells a long ſtory of how he and his brethren preached much better than the ſeparates, but I ſuppoſe he had forgot that *Paul* durſt not make himſelf of the number of ſuch as *commended themſelves*, and *meaſured themſelves by themſelves*.

So Dr. *Chauncy*, who wrote a great volume againſt the work 25 years ago, ſet down *raſh* and *uncharitable judging* as one of the greateſt evils of that day. And tho' he talks much of the ſcriptures, yet his evident ſtandard is, *themſelves*: for he ſays, "I freely confeſs, had the miniſters of *New-England* loſt their character as men of religion, by any deportment of themſelves, contradictory to the goſpel, I ſhould have found no fault with any repreſentation of them as *bad men*; nay, *dangerous enemies* to the kingdom of Chriſt: for I am clearly of the mind, that a *viſibly wicked miniſter* is the greateſt *ſcandal* to *religion*, and *plague* to the *church* of God: nor is it a hurt, but a real ſervice to the *cauſe* of Chriſt, to expoſe the characters of ſuch, and leſſen their power to do miſchief." * Thus he allows that if there had happened to have been a number of viſibly bad miniſters among us, it would

* See Dr. *Chauncy*'s Thoughts on the ſtate of religion in *New-England*. 1743, p. 141.

would have been a *real service* and not *hurt to expose* them. But *he* has judged it to be otherwise; therefore for others to judge the contrary, is a sure evidence of their being *rash* and *uncharitable* men!

The first whom he names, as guilty of this daring crime, is Mr. *Whitefield*; and he begins his evidence against him, with telling us that he "seldom preached, but he had "something or other, in his sermon, against *unconverted* "*ministers*": and that afterward in his *journal* he ex- "pressed his *fear* lest "many, may, the most that preach, do "not *experimentally know Christ*."* And to prove this to be an *abuse* of the *standing ministers* now, he says, "Hear the opinion of that eminent man of God Dr. "*Cotton Mather* upon this head": † who said, "There is "not that spot of ground upon the face of God's earth, "which can proportionably match *New-England* for mi- "nisters." But when was it so? why I find by his *life*, that this opinion was published in 1691, when (as the following words express) "No man became a minister in "these churches, 'till he first became a *communicant*; and "no man became a communicant, until he had been *se-* "*verely examined* about his *regeneration*, as well as his "*conversation*. If any minister do misbehave himself, he "soon hears of it, and becomes either a *penitent*, or a *de-* "*posed man*."

This was Dr. *Mather*'s testimony of the order of the churches in that day; but "what a *degeneracy* has come on since then! This same man of God said 24 years afterward, "There may be *much chaff* in the church.—Now, 'tis pro- "phesied Mat. 3. 12, He whose *fan is in his hand will* "*throughly purge his floor*. But verily, it must be with "more than a little *shaking* that the *fanning* work will "be carried on." Again he says, "There shall be men, "qualified like, and influenced by, the angels of God; "these *Boanerges*'s, and *sons of commotion*, shall fly thro' the "midst of heaven, having this everlasting gospel to preach "unto the inhabitants of the earth. And our glorious "Lord will *shake heaven*, and *shake the earth*, and *shake* "*all nations*, till this glorious gospel be comply'd with- "all."§

Here reader take notice, when a passage from that author seem'd to suit Dr. *Chauncy*'s turn, then he is an "eminent

* Ibid p. 140, 141. † page 142.

§ Dr. Mather's Sermon from *Hag.* 2, 6, 7. in 1715, p. 25, 28.

" eminent man of God ;" but in this now quoted, which ſo exactly agrees with the *work* which he *oppoſed*, ſee if Dr. M. eſcapes the charge of *enthuſiaſm*. The main objection which he advances againſt the work that was carried on under the miniſtry of thoſe *ſons of Thunder*, is that, " wherever it " takes place, the ſubjects of it, too generally are uncharitable to *neighbours*, to *brethren* of the *ſame community* " to *relatives*, to *miniſters* in an *eſpecial manner*."* That is, when their eyes were opened to ſee that they were men of *unclean lips*, they ſaw alſo that they *dwelt in the midſt of a people of unclean lips* : and this cauſed " more than a little *ſhaking* in the churches." And as 'tis evident that Dr. C's notion of *charity* was, to have a *good opinion* of the *miniſters* and *churches*, as they ſtood ; ſo becauſe the inſtruments and ſubjects of that work, had not ſuch an opinion of them ; therefore he *judges* of them as *enthuſiaſts*, *quakers*, and what not ? See *Rom.* 2. Many miniſters will not approve of this conduct in Dr. *Chauncy*, who yet treat us as he did them. Let us come to plain facts.

The firſt of our ſeparate churches was at *Canterbury* ; and the *ſeparation* began in this manner. The *pariſh* called a man to preach to them, who had been *licenced* for that purpoſe, by the *aſſociation* in that county. But after the church in *Canterbury* had made trial of him, they *judged* him to be " deſtitute of thoſe *eſſential qualifications* " that ought to be in a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt ; and there- " fore refuſed to join with the ſociety in their choice." And, as the ſociety perſiſted in their choice, and were juſtified therein by the *miniſters*, the *church* at length withdrew, and met at a private houſe. After which the conſociation was called ; and under their direction, a number of the members openly renounced the former principles of the *church*, and put themſelves under *Saybrook* regulation, and choſe Mr. *Cogſwell*, whom the ſociety had called before, and got him ordained as their miniſter. And they afterward, " ſent ſome of the members of the " *church* to priſon, for not attending on his miniſtry ; yea, " and threatned to proſecute Mr. *Buell* for ſtaying in the " town to preach the goſpel, upon the deſire of many " members of the *church*, without the vote of the ſociety."†

Theſe and many other *facts*, Mr. *Solomon Paine* publiſhed 16 years ago, and appealed to courts, miniſters and people for the truth of them ; and I never heard any deny them to this day. Here reader is the plain ſtate of our firſt

* Dr. *Chauncey's* thoughts p. 170.

† Vid. Mr. *Paine's* view of the churches. 1752. 17, 18.

first separate church. It is the first church in *Canterbury*, who retain their ancient *principles*, their *records*, and other furniture of the *church*: and are called *separate*, only because they refused to give up their *judgments* to the *clergy* and the world, * in so important an affair, as the choice of a *guide for their souls*. Indeed that *association* in their *letter* against the separates, p. 41, 42. say, "If there be any "of us, whose ministry is not edifying, or who dispense "not the word as we ought,—you ought to use the means "which Christ has appointed for our conviction and amend-"ment, or rejection." And they declare the churches have *liberty* "to choose their own way of church discipline, whe-"ther *Saybrook* platform, presbyterian or congregational." And yet in the next breath they accuse the separates with "rejecting the ministry and churches of Christ, and set-"ting up without any divine institution." Wherein, the very act of this church, which they are condemned for, was adhering to the *congregational* plan, and taking the only gospel way they had left to clear themselves of a minister, whose preaching was not *edifying* to them.

I say the only *gospel* method they had left; for the church had called a *congregational council* before, and after he was ordained "against the vote and solemn warning and "intreaties of the church;—and the settled ministers of "the county left the church" †—and Mr. *Pain* "went to "the general assembly in behalf of the church," with a "petition, shewing them that the church was usurped o-"ver, and oppressed, and prayed them to interpose and "forbid the society", oppressing the church to support that minister: but the court granted them no relief. No, but for many years afterward, their goods were spoiled, or persons haled to prison for that minister's support: and after their own pastor was ordained, he was prosecuted, and fined for marrying a couple, because they would not allow him to be truly ordained.

Mr. *Fish* says, the *qualifications* of *teachers*, "are to be "*judged* of by the ministers of Christ;—which true *lay-*"*teachers* refuse to submit to." p. 147. and quotes several texts out of *Timothy* and *Titus* to prove it: whereas those epistles are to direct ministers concerning their behaviour *in the church*, not *over it*. Our Lord commends the *church* of *Ephesus*, that *they had tried* them which said they were apostles,

* I say the *world*; for the *law* requires no other qualification to make a *voter* in their parishes, but a certain quantity of *worldly* estate.

† Mr. *Pain*'s view of the churches page 17. & his preface p. 7.

apoſtles, and were not; and had *found them liars*, Rev. 2. 2. And the true apoſtles, while they gave to the firſt goſpel chruch, a deſcription of what ſort of men ſhould be choſen into office in their preſence, they did not pretend to *nominate* any; but ſaid, *Brethren, look ye out among you*, ſuch men. Acts 6. 3. And *Paul* expreſsly ſhews, that *letters of commendation* in his time were To and FROM THE CHURCH, 2 Cor. 3. 1.

But theſe miniſters now, arrogate the power to *try*, and *approbate* miniſters, wholly to themſelves; and aſſiſted in *cauſing a diviſion* in the church of *Canterbury*, becauſe they would not ſubmit to that power, *contrary to the doctrine which they had learned*, in the goſpel. Here therefore, the text which they often caſt upon us, is ſtrictly applicable to them. "Mark them which *cauſe diviſions* and offences, "*contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*; and "AVOID *them*: for they that are ſuch, *ſerve not* our Lord "Jeſus Chriſt, but *their* OWN *belly*; and by *good words* and "*fair ſpeeches* DECEIVE the hearts of the ſimple." Rom. 16. 17, 18. They were as truly the *cauſe* of that *diviſion*, as ever King *Charles* was, of beginning the *civil war* by invading the *rights of the Parliament*.

There was an early diſpute among the apoſtles about *greatneſs*: but their maſter told them that if *any man* deſired to be *firſt*, the ſame ſhould be *laſt of all, and ſervant of all*. Whereupon *John* diſcovered how their ambition had operated: it had moved them to *forbid one* who was acting in *Chriſt's name, becauſe*, ſays he, *he followeth not us*. Mar. 9. 35—38. Yet what now is the import of their noiſe againſt ſeparates, but this, *They follow not us*? Our Lord repeatedly warned his diſciples againſt aſſuming ſuch a *lordly* power as civil rulers have, and ſaid, So *ſhall it* NOT BE *among you*. Mar. 10. 43. Luk. 22. 26. And *Peter* exhorted elders not to be as *lords over God's heritage*. 1 Pet. 5. 3. But one of Mr. *Fiſh's* brethren, in the ſame county, * who is a truſtee of *Yale-college*, aſſerts that the "Rights conveyed by the keys,—belonging to the elder-"ſhip *only*, are as diſtinct from the right of private members, "as the rights of a *magiſtrate* are from thoſe of a *freeman*, "in a *civil community*." And adds that, the expreſs charge given them, "not to *lord* it over God's heritage, ſuppo-"ſeth them to have ſuch rights and powers *above, over* "and diſtinct *from*, and independent *of* the church." Which aſſertions he would ſupport with this notable argument,

* County of New-London.

gument, viz. " 'Tis not poſſible they ſhould be in danger " of *abuſing* a power, they never *had*." * To which I anſwer, that, if they can't *abuſe* a power they *never had*; yet the experience of all ages proves, that they are prone to *aſſume* a power which Chriſt *never granted*: yea, which he has expreſsly *forbid*. If miniſters would leave their worldly compariſons, and attend only to divine rule, I believe they would find that it belongs to the church with them to try miniſters; and common people have the beſt advantage to know how men behave in their daily walk, and have as good right as any, to judge what *gifts* are edifying, and what *experiences* are clear. What then are thoſe miniſters doing, who aſſume the power to themſelves to judge for the church, and to forbid all who *follow not them*? Indeed there is one qualification that is greatly ſet by, which common people are ſuppoſed not to be fit judges of. This brings me to ſpeak,

II. Of Learning.

UPON this Mr. *F.* advances a formal charge againſt us, and ſays "While we give the ſeparates " credit for this verbal conceſſion, that *learning* is a good thing, and that they don't de- " ſpiſe *learning*, we muſt *charge* them with ſaying in the " next breath and confirming of it by *practice*, that there " is no need of any more than *common learning* (nor indeed " any *neceſſity* for *that*, if they have but the *Spirit*) to " qualify men for the work of the miniſtry. And accordingly they chooſe *unlearned* men, and have *none* but *ſuch* " for their *teachers*. Neither do they uſe the means for " obtaining *any* better accompliſhments: which ſhows " that they make *no account* of *colleges*, and ſuperior ſchools " of learning to educate their ſons." p. 165.

This you ſee is laid againſt us all without exception, and he often repeats it in that manner, and our *practice* is appealed to for the proof of the charge: then let that be examined.

* Vide Mr. *George Beckwith* of *Lyme's ſecond letter* againſt *lay-ordination*, *p.* 58, 59. His *firſt letter* was dedicated to Governor *Fitch*, and then he compared *ordination* to the ſwearing a *magiſtrate* into his office, after the *freemen* had choſen him, p. 26. But before his *ſecond* letter came out, the *freemen* had droſt him

Mr. *Eliſha Paine* of *Canterbury*, was one of the greateſt *lawyers* in that colony, before he left the *law* for the *goſpel*; and ſome of the miniſters approved of his preaching, 'till they found he would not conform to their ſchemes: he is an ordain'd paſtor among the ſeparates to this day. His brother *Solomon*, who was the firſt paſtor of that church at *Canterbury*, had been a leading man in the town, and had been their *repreſentative* in the general court. Mr. *Joſiah Cleaveland*, of that church ſent two of his ſons to *college*, and you ſhall hear how they were treated.

"*Yale* college Nov. 19. 1744:

"Preſent, the Rector and Tutors upon information, "that *John Cleaveland*, and *Ebenezer Cleaveland*, members "of this college, withdrew from the public worſhip of "God in the meeting houſe in *Canterbury*, carried on by "Mr. *Cogſhall* a licenced, and approved candidate for the "miniſtry, preaching there at the deſire of the firſt pariſh "or ſociety in *Canterbury*, with the ſpecial direction of the "*aſſociation* of the county of *Windham*; and that they "the ſaid *Cleavelands*, did go to and attend upon a private "ſaparate meeeting in a private houſe for divine worſhip, car-"ried on principally by one *Solomon Paine*, a lay-exhorter, on "ſeveral ſabbaths in September or October laſt." The Scholars owned the facts, and gave in the ſtate of the caſe to them, and ſhew'd that they met with the major part of the church, which they belonged to. I ſhall not trouble the reader with any more than the cloſe of their firſt anſwer which was, "That "neither the major part of the members in full communi-"on, nor any other perſons in any pariſh or ſociety, have "any right or warrant to appoint any houſe or place for worſhip

his *patron*, and ſeveral *magiſtrates out of office* for favouring the *ſtamp-act*. And what will he do now? for this compariſon will by no means ſuit his turn? Why he ſlips over, and in his ſecond letter compares power of miniſters to that of the "governor of a province, by the King's commiſſion," p, 42. This is a fine compariſon indeed! for ſuch a governor can *negative* councellors, and the acts of the general court: Yet by the way ſuch power is too great to be conveyed by a long *ſucceſſion*: if the governor dies, or is removed, the province muſt be without one 'till a *new commiſſion* is granted, *directly* from the King, and the people have no choice in the affair. Thus Mr. *B.* by wandering from truth, has involved himſelf in a ſad *dilemma*; for at home his governor is left out of office by the people, and that power he would not allow the church; and abroad governors have commiſſions directly from the King; but he has no ſuch thing to ſhow.

" worſhip on the ſabbath, diſtinct and ſeparate from, and
" in oppoſition to the meeting houſe, the public place ap-
" pointed by the general aſſembly, and the pariſh: but on
" the contrary, all ſuch places and ſeparate meetings, are
" prohibited by the antient laws of this government.

" Whereupon it is conſidered, and adjudged by the
" reſtor and tutors, that the ſaid *John* and *Ebenezer*
" *Cleavelands*, in withdrawing and ſeparating from the
" public worſhip of God, and attending upon the preach-
" ing of lay-exhorters as aforeſaid, have acted contrary to
" the rules of the goſpel, the laws of this colony, and
" of the college; and that the ſaid *Cleavelands*, ſhall be
" publickly admoniſhed for their faults aforeſaid; and if
" they continue to juſtify themſelves, and refuſe to make
" an acknowledgment, they ſhall be expelled.

"Thomas Clap. Rector."

They were expelled according, and became teachers among the ſeparates. And as the heads of the college then publiſhed this account; and Mr. *Paine* in his *view of the churches*, tranſcribed it, p. 13—15, in 1752. And as we have ſome other ordained paſtors, who have conſiderable ſkill in both the *Greek* and *Latin* tongues; and three members of one ſeparate church in *Norwich*, have each brought up a ſon at college within theſe few years, one of which is now a tutor of *Yale* college; and as a like number have been ſent to college from *Windham*, beſide ſome in other places; I leave Mr. *Fiſh* to conſider how he can anſwer what he has ſaid, either to God or man.

However, tho' his *charge* is far from truth, yet 'tis readily granted, that we have a great diſlike to ſome ſorts of learning, eſpecially the art of diſputing againſt the truth, as well as for it, the art of making eaſy things hard, inſtead of making hard things eaſy; ſuch *oppoſitions of ſcience* we * have no likening to, nor of the art of handling the *word of God deceitfully*, and twiſting things into any ſhape to ſuit men's own turns. Such things as theſe, I take to be the *leaven* which our Savior warned his diſciples againſt; for what he calls *doctrine* in one place, he calls *hypocriſy* in another. † And what ſhall we think of our author upon this point? Speaking of miniſters work, he ſays, "Our Lord hath ſhewn
" us, that LEARNING is eminently uſeful, yea even neceſſa-
" ry, Iſai. 50. 4. *The Lord God hath given me the tongue*
" *of* the learned, that I *ſhould know how to ſpeak a word*

* 1 Tim. 6. 20 † Mat. 16. 12. Luk. 12. 1.

" *in season, to him that is weary.* Intimating that he should " not have *known how*, without a learned tongue." p. 173.

When I read this, I confess it caused this enquiry in my mind, If Mr. *Fish* knows no better, than to construe this scripture so, where is his *learning?* and if he does, where is his *honesty?* His controversy with us is about *human* learning, whereas that text expresseth *divine* learning, as plain as words can possibly do; and there is great reason to think, that the prophet here personates HIM, who tho' *he were a son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered, and being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* Did any Pharisee ever abuse scripture, to impose upon people, worse than this?

Let us consider another scripture, namely, 2 Tim. 3. 6. which our author gives us a large comment upon, in order to guard against those that oppose their churches, and closeth it by saying, " This design is hid from vulgar eyes, by " the plausible covering or pretence, of setting truth in a " *clearer light*, and building up the church on a *better* " *footing*, and of *purer materials*," p. 70. Now we may take notice, that the apostle makes no distinction in the text, between *public* and *private* houses, for he often taught both *publickly* and from *house to house*; but what he points out false teachers by, is, the manner of their getting in, and the work they do when they are in. As to the first, they *creep into houses*: and we all know that *creeping* is opposite to going *upright*, therefore when Peter *dissembled*, Paul withstood *him to the face*, because he *walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel*; and that concerning introducing the *Jewish* schemes into the *christian* church, Gal. 2. 11—14. I leave Mr. *F.* to consider how well this will agree with his notion, that the " christian church is " made up of the *same materials*, that the Jewish church " was."

I remember that Mr. *Edwards* in his *farewell sermon* at *Northampton*, warned that people of their danger of being imposed upon, for he said, he knew the *art* that some young ministers had got, of *disguising* their principles, 'till they could get into place, and then they would corrupt people's minds by degrees. This leads to the other branch of the text under consideration, which is, that when those teachers are got into houses, they *lead captive silly women laden with sin, led away with divers lusts.* And how many have there been in our day, who have appeared in a *Calvinist* garb till they have got settled, and then as fast as

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any *women* or others came *laden with sin*, to talk with them about their souls concerns, they would *lead* them to the *church*, instead of leading them to *Christ first*, and so they are settled down in a *form of Godliness*; and *this sort* of men, will soon *deny the power* of it. verse. And they are ever *learning*, and never able to come to the *knowledge of the truth*, v. 7. Instead of that, they are *truce-breakers*; false to the principles which they professed, and break thro' their solemnities and engagements; and so are *Traitors*, v. 4. And if we had no such men in our land, can it be thought, that we should have heard *Judas* cried up so much as we have? I mean not to reflect upon any man's person, but only to hold up the plain truth, and leave all men to judge for themselves; and where any such men are found, God's command in ver. 5. is, *From such turn away*. Mr. *F.* pretends, that those teachers were for building the church, "of purer materials" than others; whereas the text speaks expressly of *that sort* of men, who have the form, but deny the *power of godliness*.

This leads us to another article of difference between us, which is,

III. The Nature and Power of the Spirit.

OUR author's last and most distinguishing character of the true church is, that, "Christ's "church has always had, and always will have, "his holy spirit dwelling in it." p. 44. This "spirit he says, "has always been distinguish-"ed from the spirit of antichrist, by his *purity*, *meekness*, "*gentleness*, and *patience*. The true church of Christ, "in whom his spirit dwells, has never been a *bitter*, *fierce*, *revengeful*, *persecuting* church, but the reverse. What-"ever degree of such a spirit, has at any time crept into "his church, so far as to influence some individuals, it has "ever been a blemish to her character,—been disowned "by Christ and his church, condemned and exploded." p. 47. To *this* I say, *amen* with all my heart; by this let the controversy be decided; in order to which, other facts must be laid open.

It has been already observed, that we agree in judgment, concerning there having been a most glorious out-pouring of the spirit in our day, for the conviction and conversion of many souls: but I think the same spirit led us to see the corruptions

ruptions of the miniſters and churches, ſo as to leave them, while Mr. *F.* holds the contrary. Here we part, and I have laid open the ſtate of our firſt ſeparate church, and a little of the treatment they met with, from the other party. Now we will proceed further. Tho' we had diverſe ſeparate meetings, yet 'twas more than a year after the breach at *Canterbury*, before we had any *new* church gathered, and many were in hopes that miniſters would come to better terms, but their hopes were diſappointed, for none were allowed to preach, without the miniſters licence; and I will here inſert their own account, how one of our teachers was treated, by the *authority* which theſe churches *ſtand upon*, and leave others to judge what ſpirit it diſcovered. Omitting the introduction, the charge was, *

" That *Eliſha Paine* of *Canterbury*, in the county of " *Windham*, who is not a ſettled, and ordained miniſter, " did on the 15th day of *April*, A. D. 1744. go into the " third pariſh in *Windham*, in the county aforeſaid; and " in ſaid pariſh, in the houſe of *Benjamin Cleaveland*, there " ſaid *Paine* did publickly preach, and exhort in matters " of religion, both as to doctrine and practice, to a great " number of people then preſent, that were notified many " days before the ſaid *Paine* was to preach at ſaid *Cleave-* " *land's* houſe, as before mentioned, as by preſentment " on file may appear. The ſaid *Paine* confeſſed the facts, " and pleaded, this court hath no juriſdiction of this " caſe, as on file. †

" This court having conſidered the pleas of the priſo- " ner, do judge them inſufficient, and ſay, That this " court hath juriſdiction of this caſe, and the ſaid *Paine* " refuſed to make any other plea: whereupon it is con- " ſidered by this court, that the ſaid *Eliſha Paine* ſhall " become bound, to the treaſurer of the county of *Wind-* *ham*,

* Paine's view of the churches, p. 20—22.

† " Windham, ſſ. Sept. 22. 1744. a *juſtices court.*"
Preſent, Nathanael Huntington, juſtice of peace.
" And now the priſoner at the bar, being brought before this " court, for preaching the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and exhorting " a number of people (as preſentment) pleads, that this court " hath not juriſdiction of this caſe; for that the facts complained " of, are warranted by the law of God and the King, and there- " fore not tryable by any court, or law inferior thereto; and " this he is ready to verify judgment.
" The above written is a true copy, *Eliſha Pain* as on file."
Teſt. N. Huntington, juſtice of peace.

" *ham*, in a recognizance of *one hundred pounds* lawful " money, to his peaceable and good behavior; that he " the said *Paine*, will not again offend in the like kind, " between this time, and the sitting of the county court, " to be holden at *Windham*, in and for the county of *Wind-* " *ham*, on the second Tuesday of December next, and " then appear at said court, on said day, and take up " his bond, unless the court shall see cause to continue " the same, and pay cost of this prosecution, and stand " committed until bond is given. Cost allowed, *two* " *pounds thirteen shillings, old tenor* bills. The said *Paine* " refused to give bond as above mentioned, or any ways " to comply with the judgment, and was committed the " day and year above written.

Nathanael Huntington, Just. peace.

" The above-written, is a true copy, as on record."

" Test, N. Huntington, Just. peace."

I shall only just desire the reader to observe, that there appears nothing wanting here, to make him a good preacher, but only the ministers licence, for he *preach'd* and *exhorted*, both in a *doctrinal* and *practical* way; and who could think that such treatment from the other parties, could convince us that we were wrong, and they right? It was far from doing it; but on the other hand, it convinced us that they had turn'd so far out of the gospel line, that we ought not to follow them.

And on Oct. 9. 1745. A new separate church in *Mansfield* was gathered, and they made choice of Mr. *Thomas Marsh* for their pastor, who had for many years been a deacon in the second church in *Windham*; and they appointed his ordination to be on *Jan.* 6. 1746. But the day before, many of the standing ministers met in that town, and at the same time Mr. *Marsh* was seized by an officer, and carried to *Windham* Goal, for preaching some-time before, without licence from the ministers; and on the day proposed for his ordination, as a great assembly were engag'd in religious worship, there came up a dozen or fourteen ministers, and desired a conference with this new church; hoping likely that now the *shepherd* was taken, they might *scatter the sheep*. What they talked of, was to try to convince them of their errors; but when they had begun with that old argument, " Take him Goaler!" that powerful argument upon the *body*; what free access could they rationally expect after that, to convince the mind? They complained afterward of meeting with *noisy treatment*, and who could expect less?

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The writer of this, happened to be a ſpectator of the tranſactions of that day, and tho' but young in years, and experience, yet he endeavoured carefully to obſerve what was done. Some of thoſe miniſters had been as great *promoters*, and others as great *oppoſers* of the late revival of religion, as any in the land; and the promoters of the work were put forward, and as they came up, they were ſaluted ſomething in this manner, viz. one would ſay, "Dear Mr. "*P.* you was the inſtrument of my converſion, and where "are you now?" Another, "Dear Mr. *M.* you was the "means of awakening my ſoul, and will you now fight "againſt the work of God," and others to like purpoſe. And afterward they were publickly addreſſed by one of the fathers in the ſeparation, * as near as I can remember, in theſe words, "You dear miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, who "were as *heralds* a few years ago, to ſound the goſpel "trumpet thro' the land, where are you now? are you "not joined in *confederacy* with thoſe who, your own "conſciences teſtify, are enemies to the work of God?"

They ſhewed no diſpoſition to anſwer ſuch queſtions, but made ſeveral attempts to get the church together by themſelves, 'till they found it could not be done, and at laſt they read off a remonſtrance, which they had drawn up againſt theſe things, and ſo departed. That church in *Mansfield*, the next month, choſe and ordained Mr. *John Hovey* for their paſtor, which was the firſt ordination among theſe churches; and after Mr. *Marſh* was ſet at liberty, he was ordained a colleague with him, in July following. The third ſeparate ordination, was of Mr. *Solomon Paine* at *Canterbury*, Sept. 10. 1746. and there were five more ſuch ordinations before that year was out, one of which was near Mr. *F.* at *Stonington*; and he gives a long ſtory of his own behavior, and of the treatment he met with, upon that occaſion; in order to ſhew how bad the *ſpirit* of ſeparation was, p. 156. &c.

I would always abide by what we begun upon, under this head, that the ſpirit of Chriſt is not a *fierce*, *bitter*, and *revengeful* ſpirit, but the reverſe; and that wherever ſuch a ſpirit appears, 'tis a *blemiſh* to any people; and that treatment which he deſcribes was ſo to us; but then he, and all ought to conſider, that *Solomon* ſays, *ſurely oppreſſion maketh a wiſe man mad*; and if what we had met with was not *oppreſſion*, I confeſs I know not what may be called ſo; and the *bitter* words which he ſets down, were utter-

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* Mr. *Solomon Paine*.

ed by a poor *Iriſhman*, who could not read, and was never ſet up as a teacher among our churches, but put himſelf forward at that time; and if others did not then rebuke him for it, what has been ſaid above, may in ſome meaſure account for that.

Mr. *F.* owns, that there is a great alteration among us ſince, and ſays, "'Tis readily granted that they are, now "much more moderate and civil, than they were in that "day,— are very peaceable, kind, obliging good neighbours." But, ſays he, "what does this reaſon then argue? "why, it only ſhews that they have loſt a degree of their "original *ſpirit* as *ſeparates*." p. 158. But ſtay; our author has forgot himſelf: As little learning as we have, we uſed to think, that we underſtood ſo much of *logic* as this, that if the *cauſe* was gone, the *effect* would ceaſe: therefore if ſo great a degree of the *ſpirit* of ſeparation is loſt, he need not have troubled himſelf, nor others about it. But he has drawn out things, to ſuch a length, that he will have hard work to bring his two ends together; for he begins with informing the world, that the occaſion of his writing, was the *revival* of the *ſpirit* of ſeparation; yet before he has got thro' his book, he contradicts it, leſt he ſhould allow that we were governed by a good ſpirit in ſeparating.

He calls this labour of his, A "unpleaſant taſk"; and well he might, for 'tis hard work to ſtrive to blind the truth. In order to finiſh this work, he ſays; "The raſh-"neſs and ſeverity of that ſpirit, which theſe poor bre-"thren were influenced by, appeared in ſuch accuſations, "as reſpected the hidden man of the heart," p. 159.

This brings me to ſpeak,

IV. Of knowing Chriſtians.

WHEN we firſt appeared againſt having the worthy, and the unworthy partake together at the Lord's ſupper, (which was a principal reaſon of our fathers ſeparation from the Church of *England*) miniſters told us, as I have before proved, that *tares* and *wheat* muſt grow together in the church 'till the harveſt: for they knew there were many both in public and private ſtations, who, notwithſtanding their *form* of godlineſs, *appeared* as plainly againſt the *power* of it, as the *tares* appeared by their *fruits* in the field. But

becauſe

becauſe we would not confound church and world together, as they did, they ſhifted about, and accuſed us with aſſuming God's prerogative to ſearch the heart; while they aſſerted, that we could not know who were ſaints, and who not. And when 'twas reply'd, that Chriſt ſaid, *ye ſhall know them*: the return would often be, What, are you *infallible*? Whereupon diſputes have enſued, which have often been carried to extremes on both hands. I confeſs with ſhame that I have ſometimes been thus inſnared, and ſo have given occaſion to thoſe who deſired occaſion againſt us.

And doubtleſs confidence has been carried beyond evidence, in many inſtances; and I ſuppoſe many have been more concerned to keep up a good opinion of ſuch as they have received for chriſtians, than they have to diſcharge their duty towards them in a goſpel manner. And who will ſay he is clear of fault in theſe things? May all ſtrive for greater reformation in them. But what is this writer doing, when he often charges us with *wilfulneſs* in our way? and becauſe we were not turned back by Mr. *Davenport*'s retractions he ſays, "They *held faſt deceit*, "they refuſed to return." p. 128. Again, he ſays, "The "ſtrength of their *deluſion* ſeems to lies very much in this, "that they *cannot call their conduct in queſtion*." p. 186. This is the man who accuſeth ſeparates, with judging others *hearts*! See Rom. 2. 1—3.

Mr. *F.* knows that our chief diſputes, have been upon *viſibilities* and not ſecrets. The firſt thing which he advances, to prove that ſeparates had a bad ſpirit, is that, "They en-"deavoured to draw off from us, every true believer, or "chriſtian, (in their ſenſe of the word) and would have left "a congregation behind them, of nothing but ſuch as they "judged to be hypocrites and graceleſs perſons: without "the benefit of one ſaint to aſſiſt them, in the affairs of their ſouls."

And he directly turns to the parable of the *tares*, as a *ſure* proof that this was wrong; and adds, as a great agravation of their crime, that they would call others to, "*Come* "*out from among them, and be ſeparate*; with this re-"flection, "If they are chriſtians, why don't they come "away from the Shades of *Babylon*!" p. 154. I ſuppoſe the uſe of the word *Babylon* here, was thought as criminal as any of their language; but as its ſignification is, *confuſion or mixture*, is there not at leaſt the *ſhades* of it, where civil and eccleſiaſtical affairs; *church* and *world* are

confounded

confounded together, as we have proved they are in our land? and the text refer'd to, is a call to *come out from*, and not be *unequally yoked with unbelievers*, 2 Cor. 6. 14—17. Creatures that are *unequally yoked* together, are not like to work to any advantage.

Old Mr. *Mitchel*'s thoughts are worthy of notice here, which were thus expreſſed; "The over-enlarging of full "communion of, or admiſſion of perſons there, upon ſlight "qualifications, without *inſiſting* upon the *practical* and "*ſpiritual* part of religion, will not only loſe the *power* "*of godlineſs*, but in a little time, bring in profaneneſs, "and *ruin the churches* theſe two ways. 1. Election of "miniſters, will ſoon be carried by a formal, looſer ſort. "2. The exerciſe of diſcipline, will by this means be rende-"red *impoſſible*, diſcipline falling, profaneneſs riſeth like a "flood; for the major part wanting zeal againſt ſin, will "foſter licentiouſneſs. It is not ſetting down good rules, "and directions, that will ſave it; for the ſpecification "of government, is from men, not from laws. Let ne-"ver ſo good a form of government be agreed upon, it "will ſoon degenerate, if the inſtruments, (or then) that "manage it, be not good." *Solomon* tells us that *words fitly ſpoken*, are like *apples of gold, in pictures of ſilver*: and I think theſe words of Mr. *Mitchel* are ſuch; and as Mr. *Fiſh* often refers us to this godly man; I would deſire him to turn and look into this glaſs himſelf. If this great man thought, that it would *ruin the churches*, to have many looſe members to vote for miniſters *in the church*; what would he have ſaid, if he had ſeen the *clergy* ſet up the *world over the church* in that affair? as we have ſeen them do, which cauſed the firſt ſeparation. I ſay ſet up the world *over* the church; for the law requires no other qualification to make a man a voter for a miniſter in their pariſhes, but a certain quantity of *worldly* eſtate; and *ſuch* voters turned the church in *Canterbury* out of the meeting-houſe; and then two members of it, becauſe they would go with the church, *without the camp* of ſuch men, they were turned out of one of the *fountains*, which Mr. *F.* would confine us all to for miniſters. This is not a judging men's *ſecrets*, for they are open facts in the ſight of the ſun. But what a ſpirit does our author diſcover, in his reproaching and condemning us, as apoſtates from the ſentiments of our antient fathers? He ſpends ſeveral pages to try to prove, that the antient church at *Plymouth* was

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* His life, dedication p. 17, 18.

like the ſtanding church now, and not like the ſeparates, from an account of that church, which is given in the appendix to Mr. *Robbins*'s ordination ſermon; and after picking out a few paſſages, which are chiefly the opinion of the writer of the account, now in the year 1760, he then refers it to the reader to judge how little *reſemblance* there is between them and us, p. 84. But in that ſame account, p. 32. we are informed, that the "church managed the whole affair, both of inviting and calling" miniſters, and that the firſt inſtance that appears of the *town voting* in the caſe, was *ſeventy nine years* after their firſt coming to *Plymouth*. In the ſame account p. 21. we have an information of *three* members of that church, who were ordained to the paſtoral care of other churches * that were, what Mr. *F.* calls *lay-teachers*; yet this was done fifty-ſix years after *Harvard* college was founded.

We don't pretend to take thoſe fathers as our perfect pattern; but what I complain of is, Mr. *Fiſh*'s pretending to produce their example to ſupport his cauſe, and to condemn us, and then call others to judge upon the caſe; while he conceals theſe material points, which are for us, and againſt him. I will alſo add here, that Mr. *Prince* gives it as the foundation principles of thoſe fathers which came to *Plymouth*, that their church *officers* after "being "choſen and ordained, have no *lordly*, *arbitrary* or *impoſing* power; but can only rule and miniſter *with the conſent of the brethren*; who ought not in contempt to be "called the *laity* but to be treated as *men* and *brethren* in "Chriſt, not as ſlaves or minors. And that no *churches* "or *church officers* whatever have any power over any "other church or officers, to controul or impoſe upon "them: but are equal in their rights and privileges, and "ought to be *independent* in the exerciſe and enjoyments "of them." † Yet now theſe men who pretend to be their ſucceſſors, have got ſo high an opinion of their own learning and knowledge, as to aſſume ſuch a power as our fathers abhorred.

Is not hea *ſervant* who has not liberty to act as he thinks beſt, without leave from another? Yet ſuch a power is now

* Viz. Mr. *Jonathan Dunham* at *Marthas Vineyard*; Mr. *Samuel Fuller*, the firſt miniſter in *Middleborough*; and Mr. *Iſaac Cuſhman* the firſt in *Plymton*. Mr. *Cuſhman* lived to old age, and I have heard many that have ſat under his miniſtry ſpeak of him as a faithful and ſucceſsful labourer.

† New-England chronology. p. 92.

now claim'd by ministers over their people, as not to allow them to have liberty to ask any minister to preach in their parish without their leave; and nothing is more common, than for them to call all such, *lay men*, which are not introduced into the ministry in their way. Our author is abundant in it, and Mr. *Beckwith*, who as I observed a little back, claims a *lordly* power in plain words, he uses the *lay* terms about 30 times in thirty pages.* And is not he a *minor*, who must have another to act for him, and he only yield a *silent* consent thereto? And how near to this is the custom of our land, concerning admissions into churches? I observed before, that I never knew a single instance in the standing churches, of any members being received upon a verbal declaration to the church, of what *God hath done for his soul*; no, instead of that, the ministers have assumed more to themselves in that respect, than the judges do in our civil courts; for there they ordinarily insist upon having the *witnesses personally present*, where all persons concerned, may hear their testimony from their *own mouths*; and have liberty to ask what questions they think proper; the fear of witnesses blundering in their story, shall not excuse them from giving their own account, even before great men

* Many people *love to have it so*. Therefore that *apostolick man* (as Dr. *Watts* call him) *professor Franck*, after exposing many *excuses* for the *fear of man*, says, "To which may be added "that pernicious *distinction*, derived from *Popery*, and whereby "those that are preachers, or designed for that office, are called "*spiritual* men, and the rest of the people *lay men*: whereas indeed all true christians be they in what state they will, must "be *spiritually minded*, as St. Paul teacheth, 1 Cor. 2. 16. "Rom. 8. 9, 14.—But we do not think of this, and scarcely "know, what the name *christian* imports, viz. one *anointed with* "*the spirit of Christ*; and therefore think our selves sufficiently "excused; when we can say: *I am a layick, and no spiritual man*. "It is not to be expressed, what horrid mischief this wicked "distinction is the cause of, and what deep root it hath taken in "men's minds: insomuch, that the devil himself could hardly "have found out a better way to persuade people, that one "is not as much bound as another, exactly to order his life "in all things according to the rule of God's word. Accordingly satan fails not presently to shew his claws, whenever "this *spiritual priestly office*, commended to all christians, is "earnestly pressed and inculcated: *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*, says God, Lev. "19, 17. Not to teachers alone, but to all in general." These were the sentiments of one of the greatest *reformers* in *Germany* near seventy years ago, see *fear of man*. page 115—117.

men; for *interest* is concerned, and they are afraid, *written* evidences would impose upon them: Yet in this case, where the *interest* of Christ's church is so much concerned, that as Mr. *Mitchel* observes *loose admissions* will *ruin the churches*; here none are allowed to *witness a good confession with their own mouths* before the church, but the ministers have turned them off with *written* accounts, which have often been framed by some body else, for those who are about to make an open appearance as God's *witnesses*. Nay there are some godly persons among us, who declare that when they were admitted publickly into the church, the minister read off an account, different in material points, from what they gave to him in writing, and so made them silently assent to a *lie*!

From written experiences, great numbers, especially in populous places, have now dropt giving any account thereof to the church in any way: and yet these ministers would fain make us believe they are going in the same way which our fathers set out in, when they first came to this country: but let us hear their own testimony in the affair.

Capt. *Roger Clap*, one of the first inhabitants of *Dorchester*, and who was many years captain of the castle in *Boston harbour*; he in writing of what they went thro' says, "I took notice of it, as a great favour of God unto "me, not only to preserve my life, but to give me *contentedness* in all *these straits*? insomuch that I do not re"member that ever I did wish in my heart, that I had not "come into this country.—The Lord Jesus Christ was so "plainly held out in the preaching of the gospel unto "poor lost sinners, and the absolute necessity of the *new-birth*, and God's *holy spirit* in those days, was pleased "to accompany the word with such efficacy upon the "hearts of many; that our hearts were taken off from old "*England*, and set upon *heaven*.—Many were *converted*, "and others *established* in *believing*, many joined unto the "several churches where they lived, *confessing* their faith "*publickly*, and *shewing* before all the *assembly* their *experiences* of the *workings* of God's *spirit* in their *hearts* to "bring them to Christ; which many hearers found very "much good by, to help them to try their own hearts, "and to consider how it was with them;—oh the many "tears that have been shed in *Dorchester* meeting-house "at such times, both by those that have *declared* God's "work on their souls, and also by those that *heard* them. "In those days, God, even our own God did bless New-

"England

" England." Christian history Vol. I. p. 72. You may take notice that this was their practice in the *several churches* where people lived.

Accordingly old Mr. *John Eliot* of *Roxbury* said, " It is " matter of great thankfulness that we have Christ *confessed* in our churches; by such as we receive to full " communion there. They open the work of Christ in " their hearts, and the *relation* thereof is an eminent *confession* of our Lord; experienced saints, can gather more " than a little from it. It is indeed an ordinance of wonderful benefit; the Lord planted many *vineyards* in the " first settlement of this country, and there were many " *noble vines* in them; it was their *heavenly-mindedness* " which disposed them to this exercise, and by the upholding of it, the churches are still filled with *noble* " *vines*; it mightily maintains PURITY of churches: 'tis " the duty of EVERY Christian. It is a thing that gives " great glory to the Lord Jesus Christ; and *young converts* " are thereby exceedingly edified; and the souls of *devout* " *christians* are hereby ingratiated one unto another. " The *devil* knows what he does when he *thrusts* so hard to " get *this custom* out of our churches. For my part, I " would say in this case, *get thee behind me Satan, thou* " *givest an horrible offence unto the Lord Jesus Christ.* " Let us keep up this ordinance with all *gentleness*, and " where we see the least spark of *grace* held forth, let us " prize it more than all the wit in the world." This was the testimony of one of the most faithful and successful ministers that *New-England* ever saw; wherein he boldly ascribes to the *devil* any attempts that were made to *thrust that custom* out of the churches: yet now that custom is treated with contempt by many ministers, who still would be accounted the true successors of those pious fathers.

Indeed our author has got a fine way to get along here, which is by turning off such things for *imperfections*, and he says the *order* of the churches " was more *perfected* " and established afterwards in the year 1662." p. 80. Here we shall learn what his notion of perfection is; for in that year was the *synod* which brought in (what we have called) *half way members*. Mr. *Chauncy* president of the college, and Mr. *Davenport* of *New-Haven*, both opposed that point in print, as a great *corruption* instead of *perfection*; and Mr. *Eleazer Mather* of *Northampton*, who

* Mr. Elliots life p. 68, 69.

who was in that ſynod, wrote ſoon after to Mr. *Davenport* that "There was ſcarce any of the *congregational* princi-"ples but what were layen at by ſome or other of the "aſſembly; as *relations* of the work of grace, *power* of "*voting* of the fraternity (or brethren) in admiſſi-on," &c. *

Mr. *P*'s. notion of the order of the churches being *perfected* then, makes me think of a ſtory concerning a miniſter who deſcended from a member of that ſynod, who tho' his conduct was not good, yet boaſted of treading in his grandfathers ſteps; whereupon another miniſter of greater note ſaid, "He had got his grandfathers *imperfections* to *per-*"*fection.*" Though Mr. *Mitchel* was then active in bringing in what he called the *middle-way*; Yet the importance of being careful how perſons were admitted to the Lord's-ſupper, ſtill lay upon his mind, and he wrote his tho'ts thereon on Jan. 4. 1664. Wherein, among other things, he brings in this objection, viz. Why may it no: "ſuffice, for a man publickly to ſay, *I believe on Chriſt,* "*or do unfeignedly repent of my ſins?* Or to conſent to "ſuch expreſſions being read, or propounded unto him, "without any more adoe?" His anſwer is "1ſt. He "that can *groundedly* ſo ſay, or profeſs before God, angels "and men that he *hath* unfeigned *faith* and *repentance*, "can ſay ſomewhat more, particularly to ſhew the *reality* "of his acquaintance with thoſe things. And if he can-"not ſay it, *groundedly*, it is not meet to put him ſo to ſay. "2d. He that either *cannot* or *will not* ſay any more than "ſo, he renders the *truth* of his *faith* and *repentance*, ſuſ-"picious ſo that a *rational charity*, cannot acquieſce "in it." †

There has been a great deal of ſmother raiſed in our day to hide or get over theſe ſelf evident truths, many have been for lowering the profeſſion ſo that it might not imply ſaving faith in it; but Zion's king ſays *He that is not for me is againſt me*; and he declares that *publicans* and *harlots go into the kingdom of God before* thoſe who ſaid, *I go ſir*; *and went not. Halting between two opinions*; a pretending to be for God, and yet not being *truly* ſo, has always been one of the greateſt evils, and moſt fatal ſnares that any men can be taken in. And as to the noiſe which many have made againſt our principles as tho' they tended to

* Mr Hutchinſon's hiſtory vol 1. p. 224.
† Mr. Mitchel's life. p. 86.

to perplex sincere minds; this argument has justly been retorted back again: for none will pretend to admit persons without some sort of qualification or other: and 'tis vastly more difficult to determine the point concerning *moral* sincerity, than *gracious* sincerity; for the first is only restraints and influences *upon* a person, while the other is a living principle *within* him; and I think this is an unanswerable reason which Mr. *Edwards* gives, why the latter, and not the other, makes meet members for Christ's Church, namely that moral sincerity is *transient*, and may be entirely lost; but a gracious principle *abides* for ever. As to the frightful consequence which some draw, that if none but gracious persons ought to be received to communion, then we can never know whether our communion is right or not, in this world: Old Mr. *Shepherd* gave a sufficient answer thereto an 120 years ago, in these words.

"Q. *What members ought every particular visible church* "*to consist of?*

"A. Christ being head of every particular church and "it his body, hence none are to be members of the church, "but such as are members of Christ by faith, 1 Cor. 1. 2. "1 Thes. 1.

"Q. *But do not hypocrites, and no true members of Christ* "creep in?

"A. Yes: But if they could have been known to be such "they ought to be kept out; and when they are known, "they are orderly to be cast out. Mat. 25. 1. 2 Tim. 3. "5. Rev. 2. 20. Tit. 3. 10." *

I have been the more particular on this head, because all the controversy turns very much upon it, and since Mr. *F.* says the separates "admitted members not so much upon "*outward* evidence, as upon *inward fellowship* or *feeling*." p. 145. I will add a little more concerning that matter: and I doubt not but many have had confused notions concerning fellowship, and have often put the *effect* for the *cause*, i. e. have taken what they felt towards others, for the evidence of others good estate; whereas all affections toward others, are caused by what is some way or other *manifested* from them; and if what others manifest be genuine evidences of grace, then our love thereto is genuine; but if what others manifest is not genuine language or exercises, and we are delighted therewith, those affections in us are as corrupt as the causes which produced them: hence Jesus says, *First cast out the beam out of thine*

* His first principles of the oracles of God. p. 25, 26.

own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brothers eye. And tho' the word, *feeling* is often caſt upon us as a term of reproach, yet as certain as the bible is true, all thoſe profeſſors that don't *love one another with a pure heart*, have but the dead carcaſe of religion. And as a principal means of begetting and increaſing this love, is *declaring* to each other what *God has done* for our *ſouls*; ſo our Lord ſays, *Every tree is known by his own fruit,—a good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good:* And the beloved diſciple ſays, *That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us*, &c. And to ſhew that our ſentiments are not ſingular, as well as for the edification of the ſaints, I will here tranſcribe a little of what was wrote in the laſt century, by one who is allow'd to be a man of as great learning and piety as any in his day.

I mean Dr. *John Owen*, who, after obſerving how men are liable to miſtakes in various ways, and giving cautions accordingly, he proceeds to ſpeak of ſome duties which can't be performed without ſome knowledge of others ſtate, and alſo of the way wherein it is attained," 1ſt. There are, ſays he, " many duties incumbent on us to be " performed, with and towards profeſſors, which without " admitting a judgment to be made of their ſtate and con- " dition, cannot be performed in faith. And in reference " unto theſe duties alone, it is that we are called to judge " the ſtate of others. For we are not giving countenance " unto a raſh uncharitable cenſuring of mens ſpiritual " conditions, nor unto any judging of any men, any " other than what our own duty towards them doth in- " diſpenſably require. Thus if we are to lay down our " lives for the brethren, it is very meet that we ſhould ſo " far know them ſo to be, as that we may hazard our " lives in faith when we are called thereunto. We are " alſo to join with them in thoſe ordinances wherein we " make a ſolemn profeſſion, that we are members of the " ſame body with them, that we have the ſame head, " the ſame faith and love: we muſt love them becauſe " they are begotten of God, children of our heavenly fa- " ther; and therefore muſt on ſome good ground believe " them ſo to be. In a word, the due performance of all " principal mutual goſpel duties, to the glory of God, and " our own edification, depend upon this ſuppoſition, that " we may have ſuch ſatisfying perſuaſion concerning the

" ſpiritual

" ſpiritual condition of others, and that from which we may " take our aim in what we do.

" 2. For the grounds hereof (I ſhall mention one only, " which all others do lean upon.) This is preſſed, 1 Cor. " 12. 12, 13. As the body is one, and hath many members, " and all the members of that one body being many, " are one body, ſo is Chriſt: for by one ſpirit we are all bapti- " zed into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether " we be bond or free, and have been made all to drink into one " ſpirit. They are all united unto, and hold of one head; " ſo is Chriſt myſtical, that is, all believers under Chriſt " their head. And this union they have by the inhabi- " tation of the ſame quickning ſpirit, which is in Chriſt " their head, and by him they are all brought into the " ſame ſpiritual ſtate and frame; they are made to drink " into one and the ſame ſpirit; for this ſame ſpirit pro- " duceth the ſame effects in them all, the ſame in kind " tho' differing in degrees, as the apoſtle fully declares. " Eph. 4. 3—6. And this ſpirit is in them and not in " the world, Joh. 16. And as it gives them a naturalneſs " in their duties one towards another, or in mutual caring " for, rejoicing and ſorrowing with one another as mem- " bers one of another. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26. So that it " reveals and diſcovers them to each other, ſo far as is " neceſſary for the performance of the duties mentioned, " in ſuch a manner as becomes members of the ſame body. " There is on this account a ſpiritually natural anſwering of " one to another, as face anſwereth face in the water; they " can ſee and diſcern that in others whereof they have expe- " rience in themſelves, they taſte and reliſh that in others " which they feed upon in themſelves, and wherein the " lives of their ſouls do conſiſt; the ſame ſpirit of life be- " ing in them, they have the ſame ſpiritual taſte and ſa- " vor. And unleſs their palates are diſtempered by temp- " tation or falſe opinion or prejudices, they can in their " communion taſte of that ſpirit in each other, which they " are all made to drink into. This gives them the ſame " likeneſs and image in the inward man, the ſame heavenly " light in their minds, the ſame affections; and being " thus prepared to judge and diſcern of the ſtates of each " other, in reference unto their mutual duties, they have " moreover the true rule of the word to judge of all ſpirits " and ſpiritual effects by. And this is the ground of all " that love without diſſimulation and real communion

" that is among the ſaints of God in this world. If theſe " are omitted, there is an end of all profitable uſe of " church-ſociety. Churches without this, are but mere " huſks and ſhells of churches, carcaſes without ſouls; " for as there is no real union unto Chriſt without faith, " ſo there is no real union among the members of any " church without love, and that acting itſelf in all the " duties mentioned, let not this ordinance be in vain." *

Theſe were the ſentiments of thoſe antient fathers, who were in contempt called *Puritans*, becauſe they labored to have the church brought to the *pure* ſtandard of God's word; yet how are poor creatures treated now, for their attempting, (tho' very imperfectly) to *repair the old waſtes, the deſolations of many generations*? Iſa. 6. 4. We come,

V. To ſpeak of what Miniſters Power really is, and how they come by it.

WE have ſeen much already of what power they pretend to have; but 'tis needful to open what authority Chriſt has really given to his miniſters. And the plain account in his word is,

1. That their authority is not over the *bodies*, but it concerns the *ſouls* of men. *Obey them,—for they watch for your ſouls*, Heb. 13. 17. And, 2. They have no power to make rules, nor to govern others judgments, but only to explain the rules which are made, and labour to move others to regard them. *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye ſtand*, 2 Cor. 1. 24. *I ſpeak as to wiſe men: JUDGE YE what I ſay*. 1 Cor. 10. 15. Hence, 3. The peoples obligation to regard and follow any teachers, depends upon their *teaching right*. *We have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth we commend ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God*. 2 Cor. 4. 2. They who teach right, teach by practice as well as word. *Paul* ſays, *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which* WALK *ſo as ye have us for an* ENSAMPLE: and he warns them againſt perſons of a contrary *walk*, who *mind earthly things*, Phil. 3. 17—19. Again he ſays, *Remember them whic haveh the*

* Dr. Owen on the 130th Pſalm, Edition at Edinburgh 1749. P. 325. to 328.

the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation, Heb. 13. 7. Note, we are not to obey and follow them in an implicit, or cuſtomary way, but each one muſt *conſider*, and follow others no further than they ſee that the *end of their converſation* is, *Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for evermore*, v. 8. Yea, 4. People are ſo far from being under obligation to follow teachers who don't lead in *this way*, that they incur guilt by ſuch a following of them. The apoſtle *John*, ſpeaking of the *doctrine of Chriſt*, ſays, *If there come* ANY *unto you, and bring not* THIS DOCTRINE, *receive him not into your houſe, nor bid him God ſpeed; for he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is* PARTAKER *of his evil deeds*, 2 John 10. 11. And the great apoſtle of the gentiles ſays, *Tho' we or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you*, (and than that ye *have received*) *let him be accurſed*, Gal. 1. 8, 9. And now, where is the power that is derived by a *local ſucceſſion* from the apoſtles? And which many hold their authority from as miniſters, and carry it ſo high as to *forbid* thoſe who *follow not* them, even tho' the reaſon of it were a matter of conſcience, becauſe they really believed that ſuch miniſters neither preached nor practiſed agreeable to the goſpel.

Paul was ſo far from eſtabliſhing ſuch a *local* power, that, to guard againſt all ſuch pretenſes, he ſtates the caſe upon the higheſt pitch of all creature authority, viz. *apoſtles* and *angels*: and leaving all *Peter's ſucceſſors* out of the queſtion, he brings it up to the *apoſtles* themſelves, and ſays, *Tho'* WE preach any other goſpel than that *ye have received*; nay, if an *angel* directly *from heaven* ſhould do ſo, *let him be accurſed*. Our modern miniſters would evade all this, by telling us that they don't *pervert the goſpel*, and that 'tis our erroneous *judgment*, or perverſe *will*, that makes us leave them; but *Paul* inſtead of aſſuming any ſuch *dominion* over others *faith*, ſays, *judge ye what I ſay*; and he implicitly charges them to *reject him* if he ſhould come to them with *another goſpel*.

Should any object that this allowing every one a right to receive or reject miniſters as they judge beſt, will bring miniſters authority to nothing, and ſo deſtroy ſuch an order of men out of the church:

I reply, that 'tis ſo far from it, that this is the only way to eſtabliſh the goſpel miniſtry upon its right foundation: for as Chriſt's kingdom is *not of this world*, but its foundation

dation and support is *truth*, and his ministers are furnished with that *treasure* * in their souls; so the *manifestation* thereof *commends* them to every man's *conscience*, beyond what all others approbation can do. This leads us to view how ministers come by their authority. When Zion's king ascended on high, he *gave gifts to men*; a special part whereof were, *pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* † And his command is, As EVERY *man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* ‡ This naturally opens the way for their being received into office in the church, as *gifts* from her king. *Peter* told the hundred and twenty disciples, that of the men which had companied with them, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, one must be *ordained* to be a *witness* with the apostles of his resurrection: accordingly they *gave forth their lots*; and thereby *Matthias* was put into that office. § And after the apostles were endowed with extraordinary *power* from on high, to *witness* for Christ, ‖ yet they did not so much as nominate the *seven men*, who were to be put into office in their presence, but said, *Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the holy ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.* They did accordingly, and set the men before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them, Act. 6. 3, 6. And in Acts 14. 23. which speaks of *ordaining elders in every church*; many learned men assert, that the word which is translated, *ordained*, signifies the *act of the church*, declaring their choice of those elders, by *stretching out, or lifting up the hands.* * And when *Paul* had given to *Timothy* a particular description of the characters of those who are to be put into the office both of bishops and deacons, he declares plainly that his design therein was, that *Timothy* might know how he ought to behave himself, IN *the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. Observe, he had no power *over* the church, but was to act as a leader *in* the church; and teach them what sort of men are to be chose into office, and assist in placing them therein. It is well known

* 2 Cor. 4. 7. † Eph. 4. 8—12. ‡ 1 Pet. 4 10.
§ Acts 1. 21——26. ‖ ver. 8.

* See the margin of *Cann's* bible; Dr. Watt's orthodoxy and charity, and Dr. Gill on the place.

known that the word *elder* in scripture, does not always mean persons in office, either in church or state; but often is used only for persons of superior gifts, age or experience; yea the name, when applied to officers, seems to derive its original, from the custom of chusing such persons into office; * and in this very epistle the word is plainly used in a sense, which does not distinguish those who are in office from others, 1 Tim. 5. 1, 2.

Upon the whole, I can freely leave it with every conscience to judge, whether the scriptures carry the point a whit further than this, *That leading men in the primitive church, led in ordinations as well as other things.* And who will dispute that point with any body? Those who hold the power to "constitute in office, and to remove "from office," to be intirely in the church, yet always appoint leading men, (and such as are in office when they can be conveniently had) to act in and for the church, in ordinations. Much stress is laid by many, on the terms, *commit thou*, in 2 Tim. 2. 2. in order to prove the power of ordination to be inherent in them who are already in office; but it has been already proved, that the apostles themselves, (even tho' they sometimes conveyed extraordinary gifts by laying on their hands, yet) did not pretend to act in ordinations, only in consequence of the churches act; therefore they properly acted as the churches mouth, in putting men into office, and *charging* them to be faithful therein: and *Timothy*, and all other leaders, ought to be very careful when they are called to assist in ordinations, to see that they commit the charge of souls, only to *faithful men*. *Paul* in writing to this same person, useth the same words, This *charge* I *commit* unto thee; and, I *give* thee *charge*, as synonymous terms, 1 Tim. 1. 18. & 6. 13. And be the right of ordination where it will, yet this is certain, that the direction is to commit the charge of souls to *faithful men*; and none but such can truly be in the gospel line; and when any *creep in* under a *sheeps clothing*, who are not truly such; when they discover by their fruits that they are *false* men, our Lord commands his people to *beware of them*, Mat. 7. 15, 15.

Another text which is often advanced to prove that ministerial power is handed down by an external line from the

* "Elders among the *Jews*, were the most considerable persons "for age, experience, and wisdom, who constituted the council "of the people; among the *primitive christians*, those of the "first rank in the church were called elders." *Dyche's* dictionary.

the apoſtles, is Mat. 28. 18,—20. But I think two things may be ſufficient to evince the abſurdity of conſtruing that commiſſion and promiſe in ſuch a way.

1. All the promiſes of God, are IN Chriſt Jeſus; and the heirs of promiſe are only ſuch as have *fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Heb. 6. 17, 18. How vain then muſt the attempt be, to apply that promiſe to any who have not *fled* to the goſpel *refuge*?

2. Our Lord connects *precept* and *promiſe* together in the text, *Teaching them to obſerve all things, whatſoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*: Therefore this promiſe is ſo far from ſupporting a *ſucceſſion* of unconverted miniſters, that it could not ſupport even the apoſtles themſelves, if they turned aſide from the line of truth; yea, inſtead of the *promiſe*, the *curſe* would ſeize upon an apoſtle or angel, if they ſhould turn off from the goſpel way, as I have proved before. Should any ſay, that thoſe words of *Paul* are *hypothetical* expreſſions; i. e. ſuppoſing a caſe for illuſtration, which is not granted, tho' 'tis readily allowed, that they are ſo; but I would have people remember, that 'tis chiefly from ſuch ways of ſpeaking, that they draw their pleas for unconverted miniſters, as from 1 Cor. 13. 1—3. &c.

To ſhew that my opinion about a line of ſucceſſion is not ſingular, I will tranſcribe ſome of Dr. *Owen*'s thoughts thereon, which were publiſhed in *London* 1692. in a ſmall piece called, "A guide to church-fellowſhip and order," wherein he ſays, p. 47, 48. "The office of the miniſtry, "for the *continuation* of the *church ſtate*, and adminiſtra- "tion of all ordinances of worſhip unto the end of the "world, is ſufficiently ſecured, (1.) By the *law*, conſti- "tution and appointment of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, erect- "ing that office, and giving warranty for its continuance, "to the conſummation of all things, Mat. 28. 20. Eph. "4. 13. (2.) By his continuance according unto his "promiſe, to communicate *ſpiritual gifts* unto men, for "the miniſterial edification of the church.—(3.) On the "duty of believers, or of the *church*, which is, to chuſe, "call, and ſolemnly ſet apart unto the office of the mini- "ſtry, ſuch as the Lord Chriſt by his ſpirit, hath made "meet for it, according unto the rule of his word.

"If all theſe, or any of them do fail, I acknowledge, "ſays he, that all *miniſterial authority* and ability for the "diſpenſation of goſpel ordinances muſt fail alſo, and "conſequently the ſtate of the *church*. And thoſe who

plead

" plead for the continuation of a *successive ministry*, with-
" out respect unto these things, without resolving both the
" *authority* and *office* of it unto them, do but erect a *dead*
" *image*, instead of the living and life-giving institutions of
" Christ. They take away the *living creature*, and set
" up a *skin stuffed with straw*." Thus far Dr. *Owen*.

Compare this with the opinions of the present day. Mr. *Fish* says, " Tis true indeed, Jesus did not go into the
" *colleges* or schools of learning, for his first ministers:
" nor was there any need of such a step, while Christ him-
" self was personally present, to educate his sons. But
" they, whom he took into his school, were chiefly unlearn-
" ed and ignorant men: to whom, in a little time, he
" gave such a measure of knowledge, learning and grace,
" as abundantly qualified them for the great work, where-
" to he appointed them. p. 15. But now he says, " The
" *separates* having shut learning out of doors, have there-
" by deprived themselves of the *best means* of obtaining
" and preserving the *knowledge* of *pure divine truth*." p. 169. " Neither do they *know* whether the bible is rightly
" translated, ONLY as they have it from the *learned*." p. 167. And he says, our holding the whole *power* of *ordination* to be in the *church*, is " without *any* direction in
" the whole word of God; and contrary to plain
" gospel example. p. 145. But Mr. says he, " Having
" the word of reconciliation *committed* to them, by author-
" orized hands they become ambassadors for Christ. p. 17.

Here reader observe,

1. That I have proved that he charges us falsely as to our shutting out learning.

2. Here is an awful stroke against the divinity of Jesus Christ: for it has been proved a little back, that the *end* of the *conversation* of true leaders is, Jesus Christ *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. But the end of Mr. *Fish*'s *conversation* is the contrary, and so is that of a great part of the ministers of our land: " For what less can be

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* About 13 years ago, Dr. *Mayhew* of *Boston*, plainly in print struck against the *eternal* and *essential* divinity of our Lord Jesus. Which occasioned Mr. *Pemberton*'s publishing a sermon with an appendix, upon Christ's *power* and *divinity*; to which Dr. *Cowall*, Mr. *Prince*, and Mr. *Foxcroft*, wrote a preface, where they express their hopes that, " By the blessing of Christ, it may be
" of excellent service to guard many of the readers, from those
" most dangerous suggestions against his adorable deity, which
" have been of late unhappily published, to the great grief and
" offence of many among us." The

the import of ſaying, that Chriſt taught and qualified men for the miniſtry, when he was "perſonally preſent," as he cannot or does not do now; what leſs can it be than to ſay, he is not *truly God* by nature, but only ſo by *office*, and that having ſet up officers in his kingdom, he has gone to heaven, and left them to order affairs in his abſence? God has often changed his diſpenſations, but his nature and his grace remain ever the ſame. He inſpired men to write the ſcriptures, and gave them power to *confirm his word* with *diverſe miracles*; which is not neceſſary, ſince the bible is acknowledged to be complete. But 'tis as great a truth now, as ever, that, *No man knoweth the things of God, but the ſpirit of God*; and that each ſaint has *received* this ſpirit, that they *might* KNOW *the things that are freely given to them of God*. Yet Mr. *F.* declares that we don't

They don't name either the author or book; yet this was the plaineſt teſtimony that was publiſhed among us on that occaſion, as ever I heard of: neither can I learn that Dr. *Mayhew* ever retracted that dangerous and fundamental error; yet after he died in July 1766, he was celebrated from the pulpit, and preſs, by many miniſters in town and country, as one of the brighteſt characters among them. Dr. *Chauncy*, who formerly wrote ſo much to try to prove that *New-England* miniſters had not forfeited their character, by any of their open conduct, publiſhed a funeral ſermon for him, wherein he greatly extols Dr. *Mayhew*; and in a note, p. 28. he ſays, "Two or 3 years ago a pamphlet appeared among us under the name of an *obſcure* perſon, "without *reputation*;—in which the Dr. was repreſented as an "*enemy to the atonement made by Jeſus Chriſt*. The writer of "that piece (ſays Dr. *C.*) knew little of the Dr. or the true "meaning of his works. He might as well have taxed *any* miniſter in the *town* or *province* upon this head." If I believed Dr. *Chauncy*'s teſtimony in this, I ſhould have a worſe opinion of that order of miniſters than I ever yet had; for I have great reaſon to believe, that Dr. *Mayhew*'s writings, have done the moſt to corrupt peoples minds, and to prejudice them againſt the pure *doctrines of grace*, as they were held by the *fathers* of this country, of any one man in our land.

The *obſcure* perſon without *reputation*, which Dr. *C.* refers to, is Mr. *John Cleaveland*, who was expell'd out of *college*, after he had been there about 3 years, only for his attending the worſhip of God, with the church which he was a member of, inſtead of going to hear a *candidate* which the *aſſociation* and the world had ſet up, in oppoſition to the *church*. He wrote againſt two of Dr. *M.* ſermons; and the preſident who expelled him, did himſelf ſo much honor on this occaſion, as to ſend Mr. *Cleaveland* a degree of *maſter of arts*.

don't "know whether we have the *pure divine truths* or "not, ONLY as we have it from the *learned*." Whereas *Paul* says, *my speech, and my preaching was not with enticeing words of man's wisdom, but in* DEMONSTRATION *of the* SPIRIT, *and of power: that your* FAITH *should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 4, 5. 11, 12. And *John* says, *little children, ye have an unction from the holy* ONE, and *ye know all things*; and *the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing, teacheth you of all things*. And he expresly declares, that *it is the spirit of antichrist* which *denies this*, 1 John 2. 18——27.

Then let Mr. *F.* look to it; for he has told us from Dr. *Owen* that the "*best* of human nature, if not united to the "divine nature, is no better than *sand* to build the church "upon." p. 56. Yea, and he has also given it as a clear mark of Christ's church, that it always has his *holy spirit dwelling in it*. What nonsense (if no worse) then is it, to tell of Christ's servants deriving their *knowledge* of the truth and *right* to preach it, only from the hands of men? His argument is that, "There is nothing of *inspiration* in "*translating* the bible." Answer, there is as much of inspiration in that, as there is in *transcribing* of it; and how many thousand times has that been done, before it came to the copy that he has seen? and how does he know he has got the *pure truth*, as it was wrote by inspiration? True protestants all confess, that the *certain* knowledge of the truth, is attained only by the same way in the nature of it, which *Paul* points out for the *unlearned*, to gain it by; even that when truth is rightly delivered in *words easy to be understood, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth*. This is in the midst of the chapter, which is concluded with a precept which these ministers often remind us of, viz. *Let all things be done decently and in order*, 1 Cor. 14. 9, 24. 25, 40. And a main *indecency* and *disorder* which is there condemned, is speaking in the church, in language not easily understood. And who are more guilty of such *disorders* than these great pretenders to *learning*! And what can be a greater plague to the church, than the setting up men for ministers, who never came to this *knowledge of the truth*?

But here I am checked, for Mr. *F.* ſays, "We approbate *none* for the work of the miniſtry, without *enquiring* after, and *obtaining* ſome hopeful evidences of an inward work of grace": and he ſays, that for ſeparates to ſuggeſt the contrary, "ſhows a want of good temper, and of a tender regard to *truth*; for they might *know* better if they would." p. 166.

I deſire to be informed, how we ſhall *know better*. Does Mr. *F.* believe in his conſcience, that renewing grace is entailed to *colleges*? *

A gentleman of conſiderable learning, told me, that he was once diſcourſing this matter with an aged miniſter, not far from Mr. *F.* and aſked him if he ever knew one who had got his *degree* at *college*, denied an approbation, if he ſought it? He replied, that he had known *one*: but upon further enquiry, was forced to confeſs that, *that one* went into another country and got an *approbation* there. In fact, the right of *trying* miniſters, which Chriſt gave to his *church*, and commended her for exerciſing that power, in detecting *falſe* men, (Rev. 2. 2.) is now uſurped by the *clergy*, and after they have thus robbed God's people of their right, they charge them with want of a *good temper*, if they will not be eaſy under ſuch tyranny; and with a want of regard to *truth*, if they ſuggeſt that miniſters don't uſe that power aright.

I would be far from charging them all with this; for one of Mr. *Fiſh*'s brethren of as good credit as he, ſays of many who have taken degrees at college, "Alas, for the *encouragement* they meet with! No ſooner do theſe *light, airy, faſhionable* young men, who evidently *deny, oppoſe* and banter, both publickly and privately, the great ſoul humbling, and Chriſt exalting *doctrines* of the goſpel,

* Mr. *Edwards* was far from thinking ſo; for the ſame book where he would confine the miniſters to ſuch as *man had taught* for that purpoſe; yet he ſays of colleges, "They ought to be ſo conſtituted, that vice and idleneſs ſhould have no living there: they are intolerable in ſocieties, whoſe main deſign is, to train up youth in chriſtian knowledge and eminent piety. —It ſeems to me to be a reproach to the land, that ever it ſhould be ſo with *our* colleges, that inſtead of being places of the greateſt advantages for true *piety*, one can't ſend a child thither, without great danger of his being *infected*, as to his *morals*; as it has *certainly* ſometimes been with *theſe ſocieties*." Thoughts on the work, 1742. p. 349, 350. And I ſuppoſe it has been more ſo ſince, than ever it was before.

" pel, and ridicule experimental religion as *enthusiasm*,
" and resolve christian experiences into an *over heated*
" *imagination*, and *disorder'd brain*, if not *satanical delu-*
" *sion*; I say no sooner do these young men come forth
" from the feet of *Gamaliel* into the world, and begin to
" exercise their gifts, but they are *at once* invited to preach
" and settle in the ministry; and there are *ministers* and
" churches enough that will ordain them, notwithstanding
" the *testimony* which the serious, and such as are concer-
" ned for the doctrines and interest of Christ, bear against it.
" This is too much the case at this day. We have *fre-*
" *quent* and *flagrant* instances of it; but that *runs* may read
" it, and he is *wilfully blind* that does not see it. And
" alas how dark the aspect on *these churches*! *These things*
" *are a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.*"

Let these ministers make *straight paths* for their own *feet*, before they bear so hard upon us again, for leaving of them.

Before I leave this head, I would insert a few passages taken from Dr. *Owen*, who says, " Dr. *Stillingfleet* denies
" unto the people all liberty or ability to chose their own
" pastors, to *judge* what is meet for their own *edification*;
" what is heresy, or a pernicious error, and what is not,
" or any thing of like nature. This is almost the same
" with that of the Pharisees, concerning them who admi-
" red and followed the doctrine of our Saviour, John 7.
" 49. *This people which know not the law.*—Yet was it
" *this people* whom the apostles directed to chose out from
" among themselves, persons meet for an evangelical
" office, Act 6. The same people who joined with the
" apostles and elders in the consideration of the grand
" case concerning the continuation of the legal ceremonies,
" and were associates with them in the determination of
" it, Acts 15. The same to whom all the apostolical epistles
" excepting some to particular persons, were written.—
" unto whom of all sorts, it is commanded that they should
" examine & try the spirit of antichrist and false teachers.—
" 1 John 2, 3. &c. *That people* who in following ages
" adher'd unto the faith, and the orthodox profession of
" it, when almost *all the bishops* were become *Arian* here-
" ticks.—This principle of the reformation, in vindication
" of the rights, liberties and privileges of christian people,
" to

* Mr. *Porter* of *Bridgewater*'s sermon at the ordination at *Freetown* 1747. p. 27, 28.

" to *judge* and chose for themselves in matters of religion, " we do abide by, and maintain.

" Yea, says Dr. *Owen*, I shall not be afraid to say, that " as the reformation was begun and carried on by this " principle: so when *this people* shall thro' an apprehen-" sion of their ignorance, weakness and unmeetness to judge " in matters of religion for themselves, and their own duty, " be kept and debar'd from it; or when thro' their own " sloth, negligence and viciousness, they shall be really " uncapable to manage their own interest in church affairs, " as being fit only to be governed, if not as brute crea-" tures, yet as mute persons, and that these things are im-" proved by the ambition of the clergy, ingrosing all things " in the church to themselves, as they did in former ages,— " if the *old popedom* do not return, a *new* one will be erec-" ted as bad as the other." *

I leave others to judge how near this comes to our day, with only observing, that we have seen one who calls himself a *congregational minister*, not only claiming great power in the church for himself and brethren, and judging others hearts; but also claiming *infallibility* in his judgment: for he concludes his long story of Mr. *Davenport* with these words, viz. " Suffer me here, to drop a word " of awakening, to all *you* that have separated from our " churches, that if *this confession* of Mr. *Davenport*, toge-" ther with the truths that *have* been, and *are yet* to be " told you, don't convince you that you have been, and " still are *deluded*, that is, *deceived* and turned aside from " the way of truth and duty, *in the matter of your separa-" ting*, you may, from your *non conviction*, KNOW FOR " CERTAIN, not only that you *are* thus *deluded*, but that " your *delusion* is very strong." p. 128.

It deserves particular notice, that this *new infallible* tribunal, delivers off the sentence, as the *old* one used to do, from a *fallible* rule; which rule the judge does not seem to understand very well himself; for Mr. *Davenport's* greatest error was, his assuming the power to himself to *try* ministers, and then his openly " advising and urging" people to forsake such as he had condem'd, by a " judgment for-" med, (in several instances) rashly, and upon slender " grounds," and 'tis expressly " *such separations*" that he condemned and retracted; and the wrong which he particularly

* Dr. *Owen* on the nature of evangelical churches, vid. Dr. *I. Mather's* vindication of the order of these churches, p. 27. &c

cularly observed in *exhorters*, was their being "puft up." This is the rule that our new judge gives sentence upon: and in p. 164. he says, "*Stand by thy self, come not near "me, for I am holier than thou*, (Isai. 65. 5.) is certain-"ly the language of spiritual pride; but this was the lan-"guage of separating from our churches, because (as they "said) there were hypocrites in them, which they could not "commune with." But I think we may claim liberty of a *review* upon this judgment: for the text says nothing con-cerning separating *good* men from *bad* ones: others are allowed to be *holy*, but the proud language is, I am *holier* than thou. Now this being the state of the case, let us look a little forward, and observe that our new judge owns the separates to be "erring brethren, and obliging good "neighbours;" yet some of his concluding advice to his people is, "Go not after them nor follow them.—How can "you, with a good conscience, after *I have shewn you* from "*whence* they arose, their *principles*, *spirit* and *tendency*? "They are *separates*; let them be so: let them alone." p. 191.

Another article that Mr. *D.* confessed was his "follow-"ing *impulses* or *impressions*, as a *rule* of conduct, whe-"ther they came with or without a text of scripture; and "neglecting to observe the *analogy* of scripture." This Mr. *F.* declares to be our case, p. 40. and by others, that inside religion is often treated with contempt under those names; as if none followed unreasonable *impressions*, but those who are zealous in religion: whereas all men are more or less guilty of such conduct: therefore I will insert bishop *Burnet*'s thoughts thereon, who says, "There is a "*tyranny* in most men's nature, which makes them desire "to subdue all others, by the strength of their understanding;—this *imperious* temper when it works upon "subjects of *religion*, finds somewhat to raise its spleen, "that was of itself imperious enough before; and that "which is called *fury* and *rage*, when it is employed in "other *disputes*, comes to be called *zeal*, when it is turned "towards the theories that relate to another world. But "when we consider what a sublime thing *divine truth* is, "and what a poor low thing the *mind of man* is, we shall "see cause to blunt a little the edge of our spirits, if they "are too sharp in such matters. Man is much governed by "*fancy*, and fancy follows the texture of the animal spirits, "which render many more capable of apprehending ob-"jects, that are some way proportioned to them, and more "disposed to follow them; so that *temper* prepares men

"for

" for ſome opinions, and prepoſſeſſes them againſt others. " With the greateſt part of mankind, *education* is ſo pow- " erful that they are ſcarce ever able to overcome it; and " if education and temper have hit together, it will " require a very extraordinary elevation to reſcue a man " from their force." *

Let our antagoniſt duly conſider this, and we ſhall hope to ſee him treat his brethren in another manner than he has done, concerning their leaving the ways that *education* inclines him to perſiſt in. I ſhall finiſh Mr. *Davenport's* affair with remarking, that tho' our author mentions his *burning of books*, and attempting the ſame concerning *cloaths*, and *ornaments* at *New-London*; † yet he ſeems hardly ſenſible wherein the greateſt miſtake lay, in them tranſactions; which according to my weak apprehenſion was, in venting their reſentment againſt things *without*, and not regarding what was *within* as they ought: for if we could burn all the *idols*, *books* or *hereticks* in the world, it would avail us nothing, without *charity* in our own ſouls, which *rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* It is high time to come to treat a little,

VI. Of the *Manner of preaching.*

MR *Fiſh* ſays, " *Writing* down all that is judged " expedient to deliver, at that time, and *pray-* " *ing* for aſſiſtance in delivering, is no way in- " conſiſtent, but incumbent duty, Eccl. 12. 9, 10. " *Becauſe the preacher* was *wiſe*, he ſtill *taught the peo-* " *ple knowledge, yea he gave good heed, and ſought out, and* " *ſet in order many proverbs. The preacher ſought to find* " *out acceptable words, and that which was written was* " *upright, even words of truth.*" Anſwer, *Solomon wrote* his proverbs and ſpeeches, in order to ſpread them thro' the world, but who ever thought that he read his *prayer*, and *ſermon* at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kin. 8. ? or his other ſpeeches to the people. When *writing* for the preſs, and *writing* for the *pulpit*, can be proved to be equal, then this text may ſerve the turn 'tis brought for, and not 'till then. Forty five years ago Mr. *Stoddard* called this *reading* of ſermons a " *late* practice of *ſome* miniſter;" 'twas an upſtart notion then, and he gives theſe reaſons againſt

* Preface to biſhop *Burnet's* tranſlation of *Lactantious's* hiſtory of perſecutors, 1687.

† Which was on March 6th and 7th, 1743.

gainſt it, viz. 1. " *It was not the manner of the prophets and* " *apoſtles. Barak* read the roll that was written from the " mouth of *Jeremiah*; but *Jeremiah* was not wont to read " his prophecies. It was the manner of the *Jews* to read " the ſcriptures in the ſynagogues; but after that, it was " their way to inſtruct and exhort men, not from any writ- " ten copy: Act 13. 15. Luke 4. 17, 20."

2. " *The reading of ſermons is a dull way* of preaching." * And Dr. *Watts* ſays, " A paper with the moſt pathetic " lines written upon it, has no fear nor hope, no zeal or " compaſſion; 'tis conſcious of no deſign, nor has any " ſollicitude for the ſucceſs: and a mere reader, who cold- " ly tells the people what his paper ſays, ſeems to be as " void of all theſe neceſſary qualifications, as his paper is." † Yet old Mr. *John Cotton*, one of the firſt teachers in *Boſton*, goes beyond theſe later divines, and ſays, " The reading " of a ſermon for preaching, is a *ſinful* manner of preach- " ing; the difference will ever hold, between the word " *read*, and *preached*: they are two diſtinct ordinances." ‡ And I think theſe two reaſons may evince the truth of his ſentence: viz.

1. This *reading method* is a principal means of upholding *ignorant* and *falſe* men in a way of *impoſing* on mankind. We have proof by various evidences, that ſeveral ſcholars in our colleges, both formerly and laterly, who either wanted a capacity or an inclination for learning, have practiced the getting others to make their *leſſons* for them; and ſo by the uſe of *notes* they learn to *impoſe* upon their tutors at college, and upon the people after they come from it. Hence

2. It has a natural tendency to make the word of God of none effect, which requireth ſaints to *know* their teachers, and to eſteem them very highly in love, *for their works ſake*, 1 Theſ. 5, 12, 13. Whereas in *this way*, tho' people may ſometimes *know* that their miniſter reads *other mens works*; yet how can they ever know when they *read their own*? One diſtinguiſhing character of falſe teachers is, that they have *men's perſons in admiration, becauſe of advantage*: and ſo inſtead of *knowing* and *eſteeming* miniſters for their *works-ſake*, they would have their *perſons in admiration* for the ſake of their *great ſwelling words* and ſounding *titles*. Theſe are *murmurers* and *complainers*, who often

* Sermon called the defects of preachers reprov'd 2d edition p. 15, 16. † Miſcellaneous thoughts p. 106.

‡ Mr. *Cotton's* anſwer to Mr. *Ball* p. 43. vid the end of *Stoddard's* ſermon.

deliver *hard ſpeeches* againſt the members of Chriſt. Jud. 15, 16.

I heartily concur with the ſentiments of an eminent miniſter in *London* above 20 years ago, who ſaid, "*Paul's* "advice to *Timothy* is, *meditate on theſe things, give thyſelf* "*wholly unto them.* 1 Tim. 4. 15. You will find it in "ſpirituals, as it is in temporals, the diligent hand ma- "keth rich. He that makes no preparation before hand, "what he ſhould ſay to his people, tempts God to come "out of his ordinary way to his aſſiſtance, as he that truſts "wholly to his own preparations, makes a *god of his gifts.*" * Theſe words were delivered in an ordination ſermon, from Luk. 12. 42, 43. where miniſters are called *ſtewards*; and as ſuch they ought diligently to improve all the advantages which are given them, to *treaſure* up knowledge of divine truth; and ever to truſt in God for direction and aſſiſtance to *bring forth out of their treaſure things new and old*, as any occaſion calls.

The *method* of true miniſters, both in the jewiſh and chriſtian church, always was to *preach by faith.* 2 Cor. 4. 13. 'We having the *ſame ſpirit of faith*, as it is written, 'I *believed, and therefore have I ſpoken*: *we alſo believe,* 'and *therefore ſpeak.*' I am ſenſible that many will own that when a miniſter has faith in exerciſe, he can preach better without *notes* than with them, who yet ſay, he ought to have them, becauſe he may be ſhut up. Others turn off the text now cited to *extraordinary* times; while both of theſe inſiſt upon Chriſt's promiſe, *Lo I am with you alway*, as the main proof of their notion of miniſterial authority. Such confuſed work do men make with the bible! One while that promiſe ſhall entail Chriſt's preſence to ſuch teachers as men have *heaped to themſelves*; and yet upon another turn, theſe ſame men are afraid he will *not be with them*, and ſo have *ſought out inventions*, to get along without him. This brings us to ſpeak,

VII. Of the *way* of Miniſters *Support.*

WE are often told that *they which preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel*, 1 Cor. 9. 14. but as often, as many have read this text to others, it ſeems as tho' they had never yet read it to themſelves; for the common *practice* of our land ſays, "They

* Mr. *John Hill's* ſermons, p. 215.

" They which preach the *gospel* shall live of the *law*:" yea, and not the *law* of God, but by the *law* of *man*; and however pious the persons might be who first made the law; I think the evidences that have been before exhibited, prove that the law in itself is of such a nature, as that which we read of in Psal. 94. 20. For tho' some may think that those *spoiling of goods*, and *haling men and women to prison*, which we have seen, is only an *abuse* of the law; yet a little reflection may convince them of their mistake, and that the *use* of it carries those things in its very nature. The great design of the law, is to make all the inhabitants of the town or parish pay what the rulers say is their part towards the incumbent ministers support; and the natural language of all that are attached to this way is, " If others are not *made* to do their part, I will not " do mine," and where all the people *love to have it so*, they may get along without such open *violence*: but when any happen to be convinced that the way is wrong, and so will not give what is required, they are naturally led to *take it by force*. God said of the priests, who practised so formerly, that their *sin was very great*, 1 Sam. 2. 16, 17. And how vain is it, for men to say otherwise of such practice now?

Many plead in this case, that promise to the church, that *Kings shall be her nursing fathers, and Queens her nursing mothers*. But what an odd story would it be, for any to tell of very *kind parents*, who manifested such a *tender* regard for their children, that they would *rob* one child of his food, or *cast* him *into a dungeon*, to uphold another in grandeur! Power must be exercised in families or kingdoms to *restrain* one person or community from *injuring* another; but nothing can bring any to act aright in the performance or support of divine worship, but light and truth. Hence when the place and furniture for worship, was to be provided in the wilderness with costly materials; tho' the great lawgiver, could infallibly have prescribed each mans part by law, if he had been pleased so to do; yet he took another method. For *Moses* spake unto all the congregation of the children of *Israel* saying, *this is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, silver*, &c. *Exod.* 35. 4, 5. So when the *temple* was to be built, *David* appeared as a *nursing father* in *Israel*, and for his *affection* to the house of his God, in such a manner,

that of *his own proper goods*, he gave thereto, *three thousand talents of gold*, and *seven thousand talents of refined silver*: and by his instruction and example, he moved other fathers and rulers to *offer willingly* for the house, above 5000 *talents of gold*, and a 10,000 *talents of silver*; beside great preparations of other materials. 1 Chron. 29. 3–7. This was the *method* which was taken to prepare a *place* for worship, both in the wilderness, and in the promised land. And as to the *performance* of worship, the constant Language of the divine direction was, that every person of all ranks should *bring his offering*, which God had prescribed. And tho' I know but little, yet in all that has been said upon these controversies, I never could see any proof from the bible of any allowance of the use of *coercive* power, to *compel* any to bring their offering, even under the law, where church and state were one: how much less then can it be warrantable under the gospel, where Christ's *kingdom is not of this world*? "Do ye not know, "that they which minister about holy things, live of the "things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, "are partakers with the altar? EVEN so hath the Lord "*ordained*, that they which preach the gospel, should live "of the gospel. Live OF *the gospel* (as one observes) not "of the *act of civil authority*, nor of a certain bargain "made with the people, containing a bond of stipulation: "but this is the *order of it*; those whom Christ sends, "*profit the people*, and the *church becomes bountiful*, and "the *fruit* the gospel produceth maintains the preachers "of it."

Paul in speaking of its effects among the *Phillippians* says, "Not because I desire a *gift*: but I desire *fruit that* "*may abound to your account*." *Phil.* 4. 17. And he says to the *Galatians*, 'Let *him* that is *taught* in the word, 'communicate *unto him* that *teacheth*, in *all good things*: 'be not *deceived*, God is not mocked.' Gal. 6. 6, 7. The *manner* as well as *matter* of this duty is *ordained* by him; and he will not be *mocked*, * but takes notice of the ways

* Where mens *fear* towards God is *taught by the precepts of men*, (Isa 29. 13.) there ministers and people will be principally concerned to secure their *own interest*: but when creatures are taken out of the way, and souls realize that all things are naked and opened unto the *eyes of Him* with whom *we all have to do*; a regard to him will engage ministers to watch for souls, as those who must give account, and to labor to support the weak, and suffer all things, rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Act. 20. 13.

ways of all those, who pay no regard to his command in this respect, and also of those who conceit they have found a better way for its performance, than that which God has prescribed; and he will deal with each of them according to their works.

I am sensible that this is a darling point with many, who will make a dreadful noise about *consequences*: and in particular, they often tell us, that, If it was not for the support of religion by law, a great part of the people would be mere *heathens*. Ah! that is a dreadful thing indeed! But who are *heathens*? *Paul*'s account of them is, that they had some knowledge of the *truth*, and yet did not practise agreeable to it, but *held the truth in unrighteousness*; and *when they knew God, they glorified him not* AS GOD * Such were *heathens* in *Paul*'s day; but things are so much changed since, that we have a generation of *christians* now, who pay so little regard to *God's authority*, that few of them would do any thing to support their teachers, if *man's authority* was not exerted in the affair. The Lord says, *I love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering*. Now this is in a prophecy which Jesus expressly applied to the gospel days; † and herein is a promise that Zion's mourners shall be comforted, and strengthned to *build the old wastes*, and *repair the waste cities*, (or churches) *the desolations of many generations*; and that Christ's *ministers* shall be *honoured* and *liberally* supported among the *gentiles*: and to prevent mistakes about he manner of doing it, he immediately adds, *I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering, and I will direct their work in* TRUTH, Isai. 61. 1—8. The *priests* were supported of old out of the *offerings* of the people; *even so hath the Lord ordained*, concerning his ministers now: but men have *ordained* the contrary, and *rob* others, yea even the *widow and fatherless*, to uphold the *name* of religion: and so think to

cover

20. 28.——35. 1 Cor. 9. 12. And a little view will engage people to *know* and *esteem* true ministers, and not *watch for their halting*, but endeavour to stir them up to be faithfulling their ministry, and also freely to communicate of their carnal things to them. 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. Col. 4. 17. 1 Cor. 9. 11. Indeed, instead of beating our fellow servants, each one would be concerned to approve himself to his heavenly master, by diligent improvement of all the spiritual or temporal gifts, they are made stewards of; and to stir up each other thereto; by the use of all gospel means; and leave *courts, constables* and *prisons* to be used to discipline the *lawless* world. 1 Cor. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 9.

* Rom. 1. 18, 19. † Isai. 61. 8. Luk. 4. 21

cover themselves from the reproach and wrath, which is coming on the heathen. * So when destruction was declared of old, as coming upon a *proud* and *sensual* people, under the metaphor of a sweeping tempest, the *scornful men* that *ruled* them said, *When the overflowing scourge shall pass thro', it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falshood have we hid our selves.* Therefore after speaking of the *sure foundation* which *believers* are built upon, the Lord says, *Judgment will I lay to the line,* and *righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,* &c. Isai. 28. 14—17. And as men often make a *mock* of such warnings, the prophet in ver. 22. says, *Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.*

Mr. *Fish* insinuates that 'tis our *lusts* which move us to deny their way of supporting ministers, and says, "Let "the lord of conscience judge, whether 'tis not *covetous-* "*ness,* (accompanied with *wilfulness* and *disobedience,* all "founded on *weakness*) rather than *pure conscience,* that "induceth

* Such people outdo Saul; for he *forced himself and offered,* but they must needs *force* their *neighbours to offer.* It is a duty incumbent upon all to *exhort* and *stir up one another* to every gospel practice, in our several stations; and many will tell us that 'tis an indifferent thing as to the *manner* of ministers support, if the duty is but performed: so *Saul* in another case thought he had *performed the commandment of the Lord,* because he had destroyed all, except the *best of the sheep and oxen;* and they were proposed for a *sacrifice to God:* and when he is blamed for it, he says *the people spared* them. Take notice of what a good design he had, to maintain divine worship; and how fair his plea was; for the work he was sent upon was to destroy utterly the *sinners the Amalekites,* and tho' *ox and sheep* were named in his orders; yet his reason would say, "They are harmless creatures, and what hurt can they do, now after their wicked masters are slain? Especially when they are in *Israel's* hands, who intend to worship God with them?" Let our modern reasoners produce finer pleas if they can, in the present case: yet notwithstanding *Saul's* excuses, *Samuel* said to him, *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams: for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubborness is as iniquity and idolatry: because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being King.* 1 Sam. 13. 12, and 15. 13.—23. True obedience respects the *manner* as well as *matter* of the duty, and where the word is express in both, 'tis *rejecting the word* if we don't attend to both, and our conduct (especially if we know better) is *rebellion,* instead of *obedience,* and such worship is *idolatry,* instead of *hearkning* to the true God.

" enduceth the ſeparates to *forfeit* their honour, in brea-
" ing their *own* and their *fathers* civil covenants, to ſa-
" their money." p. 164. Did mortals ever hear ſuch a *reference* before!

1. If he left the affair with the Lord of conſcience, why does he publiſh ſuch reproachful ſuggeſtions to the world for hereby we are ſtigmatized in this world, while the trial is refer'd to that which is to come.

2. In the face of this reference to the great Judge, he has judged himſelf, that we have " forfeited our honor, " ſave our money," and if that is decided what then is left to the other Judge? unleſs it be what *ſpiritual judges* uſed to refer to the *ſecular arm*, viz, the execution of the ſentence, and inflicting of puniſhment upon ſuch as they had condemned.

3. Here is a falſhood in the face of his bill, for he charges us with " breaking *civil* covenants," whereas we have no contention with him about *civil* covenants; the point we are upon, is the ſupport of *religious worſhip*. The *offerings* of the people, out of which they who miniſtred at the altar were fed, were as different from civil contracts, as their own *houſes* were from the *temple*. Covenants which are contrary to God's word, ought not to be kept. Did *Herod's* covenant or oath excuſe him in taking off *John's* head? But how are theſe covenants made, that we ſhould forfeit our honour in breaking of them? Anſwer, the *majority* of a town or pariſh votes, to a candidate a certain ſum, to come and be their miniſter; and let them offer ever ſo much, the candidate rarely takes up with the firſt propoſal, and tho' 'tis often ſaid by miniſters that the "call of the people is the call of God;" yet 'tis commonly the *worldly* ſum that turns the ſcale. This is ſo evident in our land, to make a jeſt of; and it has produced the ſame effects here as in the other *England*, where the excellent *Hervey* cried out with his dying breath, " Oh! why do " miniſters neglect the charge of ſo kind a Saviour; *fawn* " upon the *great*, and hunt after *worldly preferments* with " ſo much eagerneſs, to the diſgrace of our order? These " theſe are the things, and not our poverty or obſcurity " which render the clergy ſo juſtly contemptible to the " worldlings."

It is the majority of the people, be they ſaints or ſinners, which make theſe covenants, and *John* gives this as a diſtinguiſhing mark of *falſe prophets*, that *they are of the world, therefore ſpeak they of the world, and the world hear*

eth them. 1 John 4. 5. And the text which our author is labouring to apply to us, when he delivered this sentence, is easily retorted, viz. 2 Tim. 4. 3. for it were easy to shew, that a great part of the congregations among us, will not *endure sound doctrine*; and also that *after their own lusts* they *heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.* His sense of *heaping to themselves teachers*, is, "that they "are plenty and cheap;" and he says of separates, that "according to one grand principle of their churches, *every* "*one must exercise his gifts in public*, as he is *impressed* or "*moved* by the spirit: which gives them teachers, *heaps* "upon *heaps*; besides their ordained elders, who are gene-"rally taken out of the *same heaps.*" p. 163. I have before shewn that we hold with the apostles, that each one ought to improve the gifts which God has given him; but to pretend that we hold all to have the gift for publick teachers, is only to give another proof of his being a *false accuser*, if not a *fierce despiser of those that are good.* 2 Tim. 3. 3. Instead of our having *heaps* of teachers, there is such a *scarcity* of them, that the cries of hungry souls, constrain ordained elders to be absent from their people, much more than they would think to be duty, if there were not so many destitute flocks, while none can pretend, but that there is a *plenty* of teachers on the other side, whom *men have taught*, or *made to themselves*: and let every conscience judge which sort do most to gratify men's *lusts* or *itching ears.* And as to being *cheap*, it is no new thing for men to *lavish gold out of the bag*, * to set up and adorn false worship, rather than to *forsake all* for Christ.

Our author insinuates, that we are not governed by *pure conscience*, but rather by various *lusts* founded on *weakness*: but does he or his brethren take *Paul's* advice and directions, about dealing with *weak* brethren? or rather is not the *liberty* which they would allow, just the same with *Pharaoh's*; *go ye, serve the Lord*: *only let your flocks and your herds be stayed.* † Our fathers were not sensible

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* Isai. 46. 6.

† "Good conscience men allow (they say)
"but must be understood,
"To say as they themselves do say;
"or else it can't be good.

"In ancient ages, when the english realm,
"And popish zealots, placed at the helm;

"To

at first, what evils these are attending the use of coercive power to support religion. But our lieut. governor says, "We find nothing in the new charter, of an ecclesiastical "constitution. Liberty of conscience is granted to all, "except Papists." * And Dr. *Mather* informs us, that in a sermon to the first general assembly, after *Plymouth* and *Massachusetts* colonies were united, from 2 Chron. 12. 1. it was declared concerning the civil magistrate, that, "he "is most properly the officer of *human society*, and that a "christian by non-conformity to this or that imposed way "of worship, does not break the terms on which he is to "enjoy the benefit of *human society*. A man has a *right* "unto his life, his *estate*, his liberty, and his family, altho' "he should not come up to these & those blessed *institutions* "of our Lord." And of prosecuting such as dissent, he says, "These *violences* may bring the erroneous to be *hypocrites*; "but they will never make them to be *believers*; no, they "naturally prejudice mens minds against the *cause*, which "is therein pretended for, as being a weak, a wrong, an

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"To 'stablish that religion: tythes were fix'd,
"By canon laws, with civil intermix'd;
"Which form'd the English constitution so,
"That after-ages can't the tythes forego:
"And hence dissenters are obliged there,
"To pay incumbents, whom they never hear,
"Which some condemn, as a prelatic game,
"Who yet, by MAJOR VOTE would play the same;
"And LORD majority would claim the purse,
"For his incumbents: than which nothing worse
"LORDLY diocesan, himself, can claim:
"So these two LORDS do differ, but in name,
"One pleading English laws, for his support;
"The other feigning acts of our own court.
"Alledging law, in a perverted sense,
"To render CHARTER grant, a mere pretence:
"And as if law and charter both intend,
"To crush one church, another to befriend:
"They'd make them mean, the same that *Pharaoh* said,
"Go serve the Lord, but let your flocks be stay'd.
"But if one church be tax'd, to serve another,
"No matter whether, done by this or t'other."

These lines are taken out of a *letter*, published in 1753, by the honourable *Edward Goddard* Esq; late of *Framingham*, who was formerly one of his *Majesty's* council in this province; who closed a former tract with these lines, viz.

"'Tis lordly power, not a due respect,
"To th' ministerial function I reject."

* Mr. Hutchinson's history, vol. 2. p. 10.

" evil cauſe.—— The churches of God abroad counted, " that things did not *go well* among us, until they judg- " ed us more fully come up unto the apoſtolical rule, *To* " *leave the otherwiſe minded unto God.* Nor would I de- " ſire my ſelf to ſuffer *perſecution* upon a clearer cauſe " than that of teſtifying againſt our *perſecution* of other " chriſtians, that are not of my opinion." † I come to give my thoughts,

VIII. Of Covenant-breaking.

WE are often charged with this, and Mr. *Fiſh* ſays, " The body of the ſeparates are *truce breakers*: " for whereas they promiſed, to walk with us " in holy fellowſhip, in all goſpel ordinances, " they openly renounced communion with us, " when we the ſtanding churches, were daily attending " theſe ordinances of Chriſt, agreeable to his inſtitution." page. 173.

Now in order to view this matter in a juſt light, we ſhould know what a goſpel covenant is; and Paul ſays, *They firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* And *David* ſays, *I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* The engagement to God is perpetual, and that to one another is conditional, *by the will of God*; which makes it to be as incumbent duty to withdraw from perſons or churches, who are evidently corrupt, and will not be reclaimed, as to walk with thoſe who are not ſo. Some bring that text in the preſent caſe, which ſays of a ſaint, He *ſweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not*: ſo he does, and he will keep God's righteous judgments, let it turn out to *his own hurt* ever ſo much; even tho' they put him out of the *ſynagogue*, or *kill* him therefor. God ſays to his antient church, I *deſired mercy, and not ſacrifice*; *and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings*: *but they like men, have tranſgreſſed the covenant*: *there have they dealt treacherouſly againſt me*, Hoſ. 6. 6, 7. The words are expreſsly applied by our Saviour, to thoſe who were as zealous for *learning* and *order*, as many among us, when they complained of his freedom and compaſſion towards *ſinners*. Mat. 9. 13. And of his diſciples *plucking ears of corn* on the *ſabbath*, to ſatisfy their *hunger*. Mat. 12. 1—7.

And

† Magnalia, Book 7. p. 29.

And will not the same Jesus, vindicate the cause of his disciples now, when they go over *men's lines* to get food for their *hungry souls*? which was, as I have proved the first cause of our separation. One of the most frightful charges which our author lays against us is, "That the "following disorders, are owing *chiefly*, if not *entirely* to "the SEPARATIONS, viz. The *Lord's-day* is awfully pro-"phaned, by *numbers* tarrying *at home*, not finding a "*freedom* to attend any publick worship at all; and no "enquiry is made after them, nor any care, (that I know "of) taken of them by authority, supposing they are at "*other* meetings; for none knows where they properly "belong; *others* are present at *one* meeting, in the morn-"ing, and at noon ride off in companies to other meet-"ings, at a distance, it may be to hear the separates; and "after *that*, go and do as they please; pleading liberty of "conscience." p. 72.

This is indeed a terrible story, but many a *Jesuit* has told as frightful a one, about the consequences of letting common people have the bible; and with as much truth as this: for all the argument turns upon this point, That because many have *abused* liberty, therefore we must not let people *use* it. And tho' both *churchmen* and *dissenters* have often amused people with their *harangues* upon *liberty of conscience*; yet, as Dr. *Owen* observes, "When "it comes unto the issue, where a man is born, and in "what church he is baptized in his infancy, there all "*choice is prevented*, and in the communion of that church "he is to abide, on the penalties of being esteemed and "dealt with as a *schismatick*. In what *national church* "any person is baptized, in that *national church* he "is to continue, or answer the contrary at his peril. "And in the *precincts of what parish* his habitation falls "to be, in that particular *parish-church* is he bound to "communicate in all ordinances of worship." * This is the sentence of the same author that Mr. *Fish* quotes, the most of any one when he is shewing the *attempts* which the *gates of hell* makes against Christ's church. And he must be strangely blinded who can't see that the case among these, which our antagonist calls *congregational* churches, is exactly like what Dr. *Owen* describes of *national* ones. I have already produced the testimony of the heads of one of the *colleges*, that ministers would confine us all to for teachers, wherein they say, "That neither the ma-"jor part of the members in full communion, nor *any* other

* Dr. *Owens* guide to church fellowship and order. p. 5.

" *other perſons* in *any pariſh* or *ſociety*, have *any* right or " warrant to appoint *any* houſe or place for worſhip on " the ſabbath, diſtinct and ſeparate from, and in oppoſiti- " on to the *meeting-houſe*, the public place appointed by " the general-*aſſembly*, and the *pariſh*." The general aſſembly are the *law-givers* for the church, and the pariſh are the *executors* thereof: and we have inſtances in all parts of the land, of perſons who would not ſeparate from the churches in general, if they might be allowed only the liberty of going a little further over the pariſh line to join where they are beſt edified; but that muſt not be ſuffered, leſt one miniſter interfere with another, for each one muſt *look to his gain from his quarter*: and the *honour* alſo of the pariſh miniſter is concerned.

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" 'Tis St. *Paul's* advice to *Titus* 2. 15. *Let no man deſpiſe thee.* " *Anſwer*: Tis great pity, that this text ſhould commonly be made " uſe of as a cover to carnal preachers, and be perverted in favour " of their pride and ambition.—They interpret whatever is done " to their *perſons*, as an aſſault againſt their holy function, en- " gaging themſelves in worldy contests, and pouring forth their " malice and bitterneſs upon all thoſe, who, they ſuppoſe have af- " fronted them. If a Child of God, and eſpecially one of an in- " terior rank, deals plainly with them, they ſwell with anger, " and tell him, they are not accountable to him; he ſhould " meddle with his own buſineſs, and not reflect upon the *ſacred* " *order*. Now people being very well acquainted with the chur- " liſh temper of a *great many* miniſters, they are afraid to ſpeak " to them at all, or to do any thing which the miniſters may in- " terpret to be againſt the reſpect due unto them: as for exam- " ple, to frequent the ſermons of others, whereby they may be " better edifyed, or otherwiſe to converſe with God's faithful ſer- " vants.—The way for miniſters to avoid contempt, is to perform " their duty with all application and diligence, and by leading " a blameleſs life, ward off the reproaches and cenſures of men. " True it is, the wicked will ſpeak evil of them, bely and ſlander " them, notwithſtanding their unſpotted life and converſation; " but it is no more, than ſmoke diſſipated by the ſun, and their " calumny will ſoon vaniſh away; for when they are known, no " body will believe them any more; but Chriſt's own lambs will " then put an high value and eſteem upon the miniſters of " Chriſt". Dr. *Franks*'s treatiſe againſt the *fear of man*. p. 91, 92, 93. Again he ſays, " Every one ought to examine himſelf, " whether he comes truly in *the Name of Chriſt*; whether he be " *ſent by him*, and keep cloſe to the word of God; or whether, " inſtead of God's word, he entertain his hearers with fine *critical* " *remarks, hiſtories, ſymbols, flouriſhes of wit, flowers of oratory*, " and other ſuch-like human inventions; yea, whether he doth " in his ſermons wholly *pervert* God's ordinance by rejecting " and calumniating thoſe who deſire heartily to govern their lives

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A glaring proof of this, has lately been exposed to the public. A number of people in one part of *Ipswich*, withdrew from a minister, who openly appeared against the revival of religion, above 20 years ago, and embodied into a church, and made choice of Mr. *John Cleaveland* for their pastor; who had been expelled out of *college* as related before: yet a number of ministers, who were friends to that revival, assisted in his ordination, and so received that church into fellowship with the standing churches, and they afterward were set off as a distinct society, by the general court. But as they were blessed with a wonderful work of conviction and conversion among them four years ago, many from neighbouring parishes, who had received soul-deliverance there, were desirous of joining to that church, and were accordingly received; which gave so great offence that many neighbouring ministers who own'd it to be a good work, yet have now refused communion with Mr. *Cleaveland* and his church, only because they receive members over parish lines. A distinct *narrative* of these things he published to the world, last summer. So that all the pretence of liberty of conscience in our land, comes to the same *issue* that Dr. *Owen* speaks of, even liberty to join with the *parish church*, or be esteemed a *schismatick*.

" I heartily concur with him that causeless separations " from established churches, walking according to the or- " der of the gospel (tho' perhaps failing in the practice of " some things of small concernment) is no small sin: but " separation from the sinful practices and disorderly walk- " ings, and false unwarranted ways of worship in any, " is to fulfil the precept of *not partaking in other mens* " *sins*. * But (as he says elsewhere) † an old *opinion* of " the unlawfulness of separation from a church upon the " account of the *mixture of wicked men* in it, is made a " *scarecrow* to frighten men from attempting the *reformation* of the greatest evils." Again he says, " *churches* " are not such *sacred machines* as some suppose, erected " and acted for the outward interest and advantage of any " sort of men; but only means of the edification of believers, which they are bound to make use of, in obedience " unto

" by the gospel of Christ. He that hears such a railer, doth " not hear Christ, but the Devil himself". p. 94. "A farthing is " not despised, because we value it as a farthing; for 'tis coined " for no more: the same is the case when we value an idle " babler according to his worth." p. 89.

* Eschol p. 37. † Guide to fellowship p. 23.

" unto the *commands of Chriſt*, and no otherwiſe." * Once " more he ſays, - " A miniſter *enabled* by ſpiritual gifts, " and *engaged* by ſenſe of duty to labor conſtantly in the " uſe of all means appointed by Chriſt, for the edification " of the church, or increaſe of his myſtical body, is requi- " red in ſuch a church, as a believer may conſcientiouſly " join himſelf unto. And where it is otherwiſe, let men " cry out of *ſchiſm* and *faction* whilſt they pleaſe, Jeſus " Chriſt will acquit his diſciples, in the exerciſe of their " liberty, and accept them in the diſcharge of their duty." † Thus far the great Dr. *Owen*; who immediately adds, that, " If it be ſaid, that if all men be thus allowed to " judge of what is *beſt for their own edification*, and to act " according unto the judgment which they make, they " will be *continually parting from one church unto another*, " until all things are filled with diſturbance and confuſi- " on; I ſay, (1.) That the contrary aſſertion, namely, " that men *are not allowed* to judge what is meet and beſt " for their own edification, or not to *act according* to the " judgment they make herein, may poſſibly *keep up ſome* " *churches*, but is the ready way to *deſtroy all religion*. " (2.) That many of thoſe by whom this liberty is denied " unto profeſſing chriſtians, yet do indeed take it for grant- " ed, that they *have ſuch a liberty*, and that it is their du- " ty to make uſe of it: for what are all the conteſts be- " tween the *church of Rome, and the church of England*, ſo " far as chriſtians that are not churchmen, are concerned " in them? is it not in, whether of theſe churches *edifica-* " *tion* may be beſt obtained? If this be not the ball be- " tween us, I know not what is.——(3.) All chriſtians, " *actually do ſo*; they do judge for themſelves, unleſs they " are brutiſh; they do act according unto that judgment, " unleſs they are hardned in ſin, and therefore who do not " ſo are not to be eſteemed diſciples of Chriſt. To ſup- " poſe that all things of ſpiritual and eternal concernment, " that men are not determined and acted, every one by " his own judgment, is an imagination of men who think " but little of what they are, or do, or ſay, or write. " Even thoſe who *ſhut their eyes* againſt the light, and " follow in the herd, reſolving not to enquire into any of " theſe things, do it, becauſe they *judge it is beſt for them* " *ſo to do*. (4.) It is commonly acknowledged by *pro-* " *teſtants*, that private chriſtians have a *judgment of diſ-* " *cretion* in things of religion. The term was invented " to

* Guide to fellowſhip, p. 72. † ibid. p. 37.

" to grant them ſome liberty of judgment, in oppoſition " unto the blind obedience required by the *church of* Rome, " but withal to put a *reſtraint* upon it, and a direction of " ſome ſuperior judgment, it may be, in the church or " others.—But to allow men a judgment of diſcretion, and " not to grant it their duty to act according unto that " judgment, is to oblige them to be *fools*, and to act, *not diſ-* " *creetly*, at leaſt not according unto *their own diſcretion.*"

" (5.) The ſame is to be ſpoken of *goſpel diſcipline*, with- " out which neither can the duties of church societies be " obſerved, nor the ends of them attained. The neg- " lect, the loſs, the abuſe hereof is that which hath ruin- " ed the glory of the chriſtian religion in the world, and " brought the whole profeſſion of it into confuſion. Here- " on have the fervency and ſincerity of true *evangelical*, " mutual love been abated, yea, utterly loſt: for that love " which Jeſus Chriſt requireth among his diſciples, is ſuch " as never was in the world before, amongſt men, nor can " be in the world, but on the principles of the goſpel, and " faith therein. Therefore it is called his *new command-* " *ment*. The continuation of it amongſt the generality of " chriſtians, is but vainly pretended; little or nothing of " the reality of it in its due exerciſe is found. And this " hath enſued on the neglect of *evangelical diſcipline* in " churches, or the turning of it into a *worldly dominion*. " For one principle end of it, is the preſervation, guidance, " and acting of this love. That *mutual watch* over one " another that ought to be in all the members of the " church, the principal evidence and fruit of love without " diſſimulation, is alſo loſt hereby. Moſt men are rather " ready to ſay in the ſpirit and words of *Cain*, *Am I my* " *brothers keeper*? than to attend unto the command of " the apoſtles, *Exhort one another daily, leſt any be hard-* " *ned thro' the deceitfulneſs of ſin*; or comply with the " command of our Saviour, *if thy brother offend thee, tell* " *him of it between him and thee*. By this means likewiſe " is the *purity* of communion loſt, and thoſe received prin- " cipal members of churches, who by all the rules of *pri-* " *mitive diſcipline*, ought to be *caſt out of them.*"[*]

Dr. *Owen* has herein given ſo clear and full an anſwer to Mr. *Fiſh's* charges againſt us, that I could not forbear tranſcribing more than I at firſt deſigned: and let it be particularly noted, that either the neglect of *goſpel diſcipline*, or the turning of it into *a worldly dominion*, is, (in the view of

[*] Guide to fellowſhip p. 74.

of that eminent man of God) that which brings in *confusion* and *ruin* among christian professors: and he is so far from Mr. *Fish's* mind, who makes the *separations* the chief cause thereof, that he says, * "I do not know how far "God may accept of churches in *a very corrupt state*, and "of worship much depraved, until they have new means "for their reformation. Nor will I make any judgment of "persons, as unto their *eternal condition*, who walk in "churches so corrupted, and in the performance of wor-"ship so depraved: but as unto them who know them to "be so corrupted and depraved, it is a damnable sin to "join with them, or not to *separate* from them. Rev. 18. 4.

I leave every rational soul to judge, whether there has not been many proofs already given, that the churches which Mr. *F.* pleads for, are greatly *corrupted* and *depraved*, in those very points which Dr. *Owen* speaks of. Our authors proceedings have often made me think of a man, who had a mind to beat his neighbour, and hastily takes a sword by the blade, to club the other with the hilt; when 'tis only for the other to take hold of the hilt, and he may easily run the aggressor thro' with his own sword. For my part, I am but a poor soldier, and have a natural aversion to fighting; yet since I have seen the truth, and people of God so much abused by Mr. *Fish* and his brethren, I must return the charge, both of *truce-breaking*, and *false-accusing*, to their own doors; for their covenant as ministers, was to *feed* Christ's *sheep* and *lambs*: but instead of that, how have the *green pastures* of experimental religion been *trodden down*, and the *deep water fouled*, i. e. the word of God *corrupted* by them?

Mr. *F's nine sermons*, are a proper specimen of that treatment, which *scattered* Christ's sheep in that day: and ever since, these sheep used their christian *liberty*, † by joining together to worship God according to their own understanding of divine rule; those ministers have been *false-accusers* of them, even down to this time. The ministers in *Windham* county, in their *association letter* against the separates say, p. 32. "Another of these false and "evil principles, which some have drank in, and others "are stricken with, is, that *no other* call is necessary to a "persons

* Ibid p. 52.

† Dr. *Owen* says of *sincere believers*, "That in these persons "there resides an *indefeazable right* always to gather themselves "into a church-state, and to administer all gospel ordinances, "which all the world cannot deprive them of." Guide to "fellowship, p. 52.

" perſons undertaking to preach the goſpel, but [illegible]s being " a true chriſtian, and having an inward motion of the " ſpirit, or a perſwaſion in his own mind, that it is the will " of God he ſhould preach and perform *other miniſterial* " *acts*: the neceſſary conſequence of which is, that there is " no ſtanding inſtituted miniſtry or order of men peculi- " arly appointed to that work in the chriſtian church, " known and diſtinguiſhed from all others, by the viſible " laws of Chriſt's kingdom. From this falſe ground (ſay " they) chiefly have ſprung up ſo many preachers and ex- " horters who are unconvincible, and will hear to reaſon " nor argument againſt their practice." Then they pro- ceed to a long train of arguments to prove the goſpel miniſtry to be an inſtitution of Chriſt.

But they might, with as much truth or propriety, have charged the ſeparates in general with denying the Bible, becauſe they did not come to hear them explain or *corrupt* it; and ſo have gone on to prove it to be the word of God: for we have all along held that goſpel miniſters are " an order of men peculiarly appointed to that work in the " chriſtian church, known and diſtinguiſhed from all others " by the viſible laws of Chriſt's kingdom," as ſtrongly as they do, who condemn us. 'Tis true we don't fix that *order* in academical *degrees*, nor in a local *ſucceſſion*; neither do we know men to be Chriſt's miniſters by their *dreſs*, or *titles*. And 'tis acknowledged that " no arguments have convin- " ced us," as yet, that any are true miniſters, becauſe they have ſuch a *ſpirit of diſcerning* as to ſee *covetouſneſs* in ſuch as chooſe to ſuffer ſpoiling of goods or impriſonment rather than to pay what is demanded in an un-goſpel way; while at the ſame time they can't ſee it in themſelves, tho' they permit the widow and fatherleſs to be diſtrained upon, rather than forego any part of what they firſt agreed for. Yea, who can diſcern *covetouſneſs* in miniſters abroad, who ap- pear willing to ſpend and be ſpent for the good of ſouls, and make no demands, but only take what is freely given them; and yet can't diſcern it at home, where they can *never have enough*, but are often begging for additions to the ſum they firſt bargained for.

M [illegible]either

* Dr. *Chauncy* of *Boſton* inſinuates, that Mr. *Whitefield* was moved to travel and labour as he did, " from the undue influence of " *too high an opinion* of his own *gifts* and graces;" and from a regard to temporal gain. " No one (ſays the doctor) can believe " beſides himſelf, can tell the *amount* of the *preſents*, he received [illegible] in

Neither are we convinced that thoſe are following the humble Jeſus, who accuſe others with *pride* and *boaſting*, who attempt to improve their gifts without theſe miniſters licence, and aſpire to ſuch *greatneſs* as to *forbid them*: while they ſet up youths for miniſters, who have not *gifts*, even after they have laid their hands on them, ſufficient to teach publickly without *reading* line by line as children do their *leſſons*.

I have obſerved that Dr. *Chauncy* himſelf owns, that 'tis "a real ſervice to the *cauſe* of Chriſt to expoſe the characters of *viſibly wicked miniſters*, and leſſen their power "to do miſchief." And had I not been convinced that we have many ſuch in our land, who have been great cauſers of many *diviſions* and *offences*, contrary to the *doctrines* of the goſpel, who yet with *good words* and *fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple*, I could by no means have been willing to have followed them ſo far thro' their winding laberinths, many when they meet with the word *diviſion* or *ſeparation* in an ill ſenſe, they readily apply it to ſuch as the clergy have ſtigmatized under that name. "But "alas! (ſays Dr. *Franck*) we never enquire, who is the "*cauſe* of the trouble. Not they, who earneſtly contend "for God's word, but they that will not receive it, are "the *cauſe* of all the noiſe and diſquiet, and therefore ought "to be puniſhed: but where the *wolf* is judge, the poor "*ſheep* always trouble the water." [a]

For the *aſſociation* to repreſent, becauſe we hold to an *internal call* into the miniſtry, that we hold to, "no other," is as unjuſt as it would be to aſſert, becauſe we hold to *internal* religion, that therefore we hold to nothing *external*. And Mr. *Fiſh* is more inexcuſable than they in ſaying we are "influenced rather by *inward impreſſions*, than "by the plain word of God, or manifeſt pointings of "providence. And don't hold to the neceſſity of *com*-"*mon learning* in miniſters; but ſay, the *leſs* of *learning* "the *more* of *faith*.". p. 139. 165. 177. For our ſentiments have been publiſhed by various hands which expreſs the contrary, and which, amidſt all our miſtakes, has been in a meaſure confirmed by our practice; but it ſeems to be

"in this town, as well as in other places, for his *own proper* uſe." *Chauncy's* thoughts, p. 36, 37. If no others knew what Mr. *Whiteſield* had freely given him; why does the Dr. meddle with his *ſecrets*? That other miniſters are not content with what they bargain for, is no *ſecret*.

[a] Treatiſe of the fear of man, p. 87.

be beneath the dignity of theſe miniſters, to take any notice of lay teachers writings, even tho' it be to correct their miſtakes, (a notable proof of their *humility* by the way) and the chief which he advances againſt us before the world, is upon his word of honor. * I muſt not therefore let another of his charges paſs without notice.

While Mr. *F.* is eſſaying to open the ſeparate *principles*, he ſays, "Their firſt miniſter in this place (i. e. "*Stonington*) was elected by *revelation*, which was after "this manner. The brethren at a meeting, appointed "for the purpoſe, having an *impreſſion*, that if it was the "Lord's will that they ſhould have a miniſter, he would "ſhew it to them, and *reveal* the *man's* name, or ſhew them "*the very man*. Upon *this*, one of their number in a "viſion or ſwoon, had a revelation that he *himſelf* was to "be their miniſter: but the brethren not having fellow-"ſhip with him in his diſcovery, rejected *his* revelation; "tho' he declared to me he knew it to be from heaven. At "the next meeting, and under the like *impreſſion* in a trance or "ſwoon, 'twas revealed to another brother that ſuch a "man, by name, was to be their miniſter; with which "they had fellowſhip: and *him* they choſe,—ordain'd,—"ſilenc'd,—caſt out of their church, and delivered up to "ſatan, in *leſs* than a *year*. p. 14.

As it happens, I was an eye and ear witneſs of the viſible tranſactions of that meeting. (For tho' he makes it two meetings, it was but one) therefore I will give the plain ſtate of the viſible facts, leaving what is ſecret to others.

* A particular deſcription of our ſentiments concerning an *internal call* to preach the goſpel, was publiſhed 14 years ago; in which therein it was obſerved, "That holding to an *internal call*; no way "invalidates *external* ordination: for as when a ſoul is converted, tho' he has an *internal* right to all the privileges of the "church of Chriſt, yet he has not an *external* right thereto, "'till he is openly received as a *member*: ſo a perſon that is "called to preach, has not a right to act in thoſe things which "are *peculiar* to an *officer* in the church, 'till he is publickly "ſet apart therein." And a challenge was then made to *all men* "to ſhew if they could, "That God has left it any more in "the hands of any mortals, to ſay who ſhall be his *miniſters*, "and who not, than he has to ſay who ſhall be his *children*, "and who not." It was obſerved that he has given *marks* whereby each may be known and received into their places. Now if theſe principles were falſe, would it not have become Mr. *F.* much better, to have pointed out wherein they are ſo, than to have caſt out ſo many things againſt us which we deny? unleſs he could advance ſtronger proof therefore than his bare word.

Mr. *Matthew Smith* of *Mansfield*, had preached upon trial, to that church, a considerable time, 'till they thought proper to appoint a meeting to seek for divine direction, and to proceed to the choice of a pastor, as they might have clearness; and there happened to be several other teachers present, one of which, when the question was asked about, what should be the *method* of proceeding, in choosing a pastor? Answered, that if any see it to be their lot, they should declare it. But little if any reply was made thereto; and soon after, this man fell into a strange frame, and then made the declaration which Mr. *F.* speaks of: which struck a visible damp upon the assembly, as being an *unexpected* thing, and none concurred therewith. And the rest of the day was spent in worship, 'till in, or near the evening, when some of the church got into a labour with one of their brethren, upon some of his moral conduct, which they judged not to be agreeable to rule: and at length he was brought to confess it, which gave as visible a quickning to their minds, as the other declaration had a damp; and a leading brother in the church being much overcome, took hold of Mr. *Smith* (who was expected before to be their minister) and told him he was the man to go before them; * and all concurred therewith: and he was ordained *Dec.* 10. 1746. and he ministred in word and ordinances to them, 'till the spring 1749. Then he went off and left his flock; for which, after various labours with him, he was, by the advice of a council, excommunicated on *July* 20. 1750. as I had the account in a letter from a member of the council soon after, which letter is now before me. Three or four years afterwards, Mr. *Smith* returned and confest his fault to the church, and they forgave him. The man also who made that *declaration*, has also seen clearly since how he was imposed upon then, as I have reason to think, from the account he gave me of it, some years ago.

This is the true state of those affairs, as may be proved; and I leave the reader to make his own remarks. But O *New-England*! *New-England*! whither art thou fallen! Once it could be said of thee that, "No man became a "*minister* or *communicant* in thy churches, until he had "been *severely examined* about his *regeneration*, as well as "*conversation*; and if *any minister* did misbehave himself, "he soon heard of it, and became either a *penitent*, or a "*deposed*

* Here note, this has not been our common *method*.

"*deposed man.*" *. Yet now, those who are making some imperfect attempts to restore that ancient *discipline*, are thus publickly *stigmatized* by one of thy ministers; who solemnly declares he does it with a good design, even to draw their *picture* to *the life*,—that they may be ashamed, p. 130. Yet as he has omitted *two strokes in the colouring*, which have often been given out from the *pulpits* in this land, and which have not been sufficiently detected to the public, I will take this occasion to correct them.

In order to shew the dreadful tendency of separations, ministers have often mentioned, *Ward's* daughter that was taken from her husband, and *John Smith's* wife who was poisoned with *rats-bane*. The *facts* were thus; one *Ward* had met with the separates in *Attleborough* for a while, and had preached to such as would hear him; but he never was received into their church. He had one or a child who did not live comfortably with her husband, and at length *Ward* took a *fancy* that she had not got the *right man*; and so took her away, and gave her to another: now tho' he was not a member with them, yet some of the brethren in *Attleborough*, went as neighbours, and laboured to convince him of his error; but he persisted therein, and in the event was forced to leave his country. *John Smith* was a member of Mr. *Pain's* church in *Canterbury*, but after a while he declared that 'twas revealed to him that such a woman was to be his wife; and when he was questioned upon it, he said he did not pretend to put away the wife he then had, but providence would take her out of the way. This appeared so dark that the church called him to account for it, and the pastor (as he told me) openly told him in the church, that this principle carried *murder* in its nature; but he would not hear the church, and therefore was *cast out*. And three or four months after, he went to an *apothecary* at *Norwich*, and bought some *rats-bane*; with which 'twas supposed, the woman he had a fancy for, poison'd his wife; for which they were tried at *Windham* court; when (as I was credibly informed) they took off such as were *separates* from the *jury*; and, to the astonishment of many were acquitted; and afterwards they were married together, but lived and died miserably. This is

* This is Dr. *Cotton Mather's* testimony, as it was cited by Dr. *Chauncy*, (p. 142.) to condemn Mr. *Whitefield* as *uncharitable*, for expressing his "*fear* lest *many, nay most* that preach in *New-England do not experimentally know* Christ."

is the open ſtate of thoſe *facts*; and yet they have been caſt upon the *ſeparates*, from one end of the land to the other, as evidences of the *bad tendency* of their *ſeparation*!

However, this is no new thing; 'tis an old ſtratagem of thoſe who have the *form* but *deny the power of godlineſs*, from whom we are required to *turn away*. "But (ſaid a "great reformer in *Germany*) who but a mad man would "charge Chriſt with the guilt of *Judas*? or blame the "apoſtles and the godly preſbyters of the church at *Ephe-* "*ſus* for that *out of their own ſelves* there did men ariſe "*ſpeaking perverſe things*?" *

Now reader thou art to judge for thy ſelf. I have joined iſſue with Mr. *Fiſh*, that 'the church of Chriſt in which 'his ſpirit dwells, has never been a *bitter, fierce, revenge-* '*ful, perſecuting* church: but the reverſe." And he has exerted all his learning in an attempt to prove that the ſtanding churches have that ſpirit, and that the ſeparates have the contrary character. And he has advanced it as a principal evidence of their not having the ſpirit of Chriſt, that 'They endeavoured to draw off every *true Chriſtian*, 'and would have left a congregation behind them, of no- 'thing but *hypocrites* and *graceleſs perſons*.' This is brought to prove that they had not a *kind and charitable ſpirit*. But if he had reviewed a text that ſtands as a *motto* in his title page, which calls him to *meaſure the patern*; and had obſerved that the rule given to meaſure the *form* and *faſhion* of God's houſe by, with the *goings out* and *comings in thereof*, is, that, *The whole limit thereof round about* ſhall be, MOST HOLY: *behold*, THIS *is the law of the houſe*. Ezek. 43. 10—12. And alſo had taken notice, that the terms given to another prophet, upon which alone he ſhould be God's *mouth*, were, *If thou take forth the pre-* *cious from the vile*. (Jer. 15. 19.) And that the *holy ſpirit* expreſsly commands us in the new teſtament, to *Come out and be ſeparate from unbelievers*; and to *turn away from* thoſe who have the *form*, but *deny the power of godlineſs*. 2. Cor. 6. 14—17. 2 Tim. 3. 5. If he had duly obſerved theſe rules, how could he ever have charged the *acting upon them*, as the firſt evidence that thoſe who *acted ſo*, had not the *ſpirit* that indicted them; but that they had an *unmerciful* ſpirit becauſe they would not go with him and others in a contrary way?

Indeed the other text in his title page; (*They are not all Iſrael which are of Iſrael*,) plainly points us to the way that

* Chriſtian Hiſtory vol. 2. p. 283.

that theſe miniſters get along in, concerning theſe affairs. They *confound* the conſtitution of the jewiſh and chriſtian church together; and ſhuffle and ſhift from one to the other, as occaſion ſuits; and then charge us with not *diſtinguiſhing* between the *viſible* and *inviſible* church. They allow that the *inviſible* church contains none but the *firſt-born which are written in heaven*. Heb. 12. 23. But they would have the *viſible* church contain abundance more; and fly to the *Jews*, to *parables*, and to *hypocrites* to ſupport their notions. Whereas the proper notion of *viſible*, is the making *manifeſt* what was before *inviſible*: hence ſays *Paul*, *with the heart man believeth*; and *with the mouth confeſſion is made*. Therefore, an *outward ſhew* of what is not *inviſibly real*, is *hypocriſy*. * Thus when they accuſe others with not diſtinguiſhing things, they *turn things upſide down*, (Iſai. 29. 16.) at a fad rate.

The only reaſon why any beſide regenerate ſouls get into the viſible church, is not owing to the *rule*, but to man's *imperfection* in acting upon it. Hence old Mr. *Shepherd*, in anſwer to this queſtion: "Do not hypocrites, and no "true members of Chriſt *creep in?*" ſays he, yes: but if "they *could have been known* to be ſuch, they ought to be "*kept out*; and when they *are known*, they are orderly to "be *caſt out*. Mat. 25. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Rev. 2. 20. "Tit. 3. 10. † This is the ſentence of one of the *fathers* who compoſed the *congregational platform*: and I know not of a ſingle member in all our churches, who could not heartily ſubſcribe thereto; and a principal cauſe of our ſeparation was the *apoſtacy* (as I have ſhewn of thoſe who ſtill uſurp that name) from theſe principles, even ſo far as to ſay by word and practice of the *church*, what Chriſt ſays of the *world*; *Let tares and wheat grow together*. And becauſe we would not join with them in this *contradiction* of our Lord, they have *contradicted* that very command ever ſince in their practice.

Mr.

* Mr. *Clark* of *Salem*, complains of Dr. *Gill*, as not diſtinguiſhing between the *external* adminiſtration, and *internal* efficacy of the covenant: and he ſays, "A man may be in the covenant "of grace, in reſpect of its viſible adminiſtration—and yet he "may not be in the covenant of grace in regard of its ſpiritual "diſpenſation and efficacy. This is the caſe of all *cloſe hypo-*"*crites*." And that is all the place in the covenant which I can find that he has got for unregenerate children. See his anſwer to *Gill*, p. 248.

† His ſum of the chriſtian religion, p. 25, 26.

Mr. *Fiſh* labours to prove, that we had a *bitter perſecuting ſpirit*, becauſe many called thoſe miniſters, Hirelings and blind guides, who were greedy of filthy lucre. 'p. 155." 'Tis acknowledged that we talk'd ſo, and thought ſo, concerning many of them, and retain ſuch thoughts to this day; and the reader has now ſeen a little of our grounds for ſuch thoughts. But we never thought ſo of *all* thoſe who are called *ſtanding miniſters*. No, but ſtill retain a hearty regard to many miniſters and members in thoſe churches as being ſaints: yet *truth* is not to be parted with, for the greateſt, nor the beſt of men. When *Peter* and *Barnabas* were carried away with a *deluſive* ſcheme of *confounding* the jewiſh and chriſtian diſpenſation together, *Paul withſtood* them to the *face*, becauſe they *walked not uprightly according to the* TRUTH *of the goſpel*. And would not give *place by ſubjection, no not for an hour*. Gal. 2. 5, 11, 14. yet our refuſing ſubjection, and openly withſtanding theſe miniſters after ſeveral *years* trial, is "charged as a *raſh* and *haſty* thing:" and Mr. *F.* tells much of the wrong *manner* of the ſeparates behaving then.

To which I would ſay, I heartily concur with Mr. *Prince* that, "As for *ſpiritual pride* and *raſh judging*,—ſome "lately wrought upon, eſpecially in *hours of temptation*, "have grievouſly exceeded, yet ſome hopefully renewed "are freer than others from thoſe *exceſſes*: and, ſays he, "I never knew the *moſt grown, humble* and *prudent ſaint* "on earth wholly without them; for if I had I ſhould "hold perfection in the preſent ſtate: much leſs can we "expect the *new-born convert* to be ſo humblewiſe, &c. "as grown chriſtians." * But tho' our author is forced to own, that the ſeparates have conſiderable of a good temper and behavior among them now; yet after raking up many of the *raſheſt* things he could find in former times, he ſays, "Whatever *good things* they have among them, "they have them not *as ſeparates*: —The things that I "have told you of above, are their *characteriſticks*.' p. 160. He even outdoes the *Jews*, for when they were afraid that a good work which Jeſus had wrought, would be taken as an evidence for him; they ſaid, *Give God the praiſe, we know that this man is a ſinner*, John 9. 24. But now, he implicitly ſays, *give us the praiſe*; for he ſays, "I know "not one *principle* or *practice* among them, that is agreeable to the goſpel, but what they learned in OUR churches." p. 113.

* Chriſtian Hiſtory for 4. p. 405.

On the other hand *his party* have imprisoned at least *five* of our brethren only for preaching without their licence; * and several scores of persons for ministers *rates*; beside several *thousands of pounds* worth of goods which have been torn away for the same purpose: yet not a single instance is produced of the use of any *violent methods* on our side; not so much as to *rescue any* of those persons or goods, nor to revenge upon any for such injuries. Not unto us, not unto us, but to God's name alone belongs the glory that we have been thus kept. One of Mr. *F.'s* greatest proofs of the separates having a bad spirit, is some rash *expressions* a poor *irishman* used towards him at an ordination, which he says others did not rebuke him for: But I could have balanced them *expressions* with *rash actions* on his side. For at a separate ordination in *May* 1750, in a county town, after a *stage* was erected for the performing the work upon, and one of our elders had begun the worship of God, he was violently pulled down, and the *stage* torn to pieces, in the presence of the high *Sheriff*; one or more *justices of the peace* and the *parish minister*, who altogether did as little to check it, as our leaders did in the other case: and I could have balanced all his accounts at that *rate*. But I have no liking to that method. I would speak it to the honor of God, that in later years many of our *rulers* have acted worthily in their places, to check and restrain such abuses. And since Mr. *F.* grants that the separates are now, "very peaceable, kind, obliging good neighbours:" 'tis a public shame to him, and many of his brethren that they will not let them live so.

PART IV.

Remarks upon what Mr. *F.* has wrote concerning *Baptism.*

VArious corruptions of the present day I apprehend had not been opened and testified against, as they ought; which caused me to enlarge upon them; but *baptism* has been so often treated upon by better hands, that I had tho'ts

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* Mr. *Thomas Marsh*, *Elisha Pain*, and *Solomon Pain* of *Windham*, and *John Pain*, and *John Palmer* at *Hartford*. *John Pain* was confined 11 Months.

firſt of paſſing over what Mr. *Fiſh* has ſaid upon it, without notice: but for ſeveral reaſons I have altered my mind, and concluded to make a few *remarks* upon that part of his book alſo.

And the firſt remark I ſhall make is, that our author takes the method which many have done before him, and tries firſt to *inflame* peoples natural *paſſions*, and then he is pretty certain to get his argument with them: for he ſays, "The church was always *fond* of her *children*,—And can "we now, without *horror*, indulge the thought, either that "Chriſt hath caſt them off, or that the church is *become* "*as cruel as the Oſtrich*." p. 28. And having ſpent a whole page in ſuch *exclamations*, he then tells of "fair-"ly arguing the points:" but if the firſt point is gained, that the baptiſts principles are *horribly cruel*, what room can be left for argument in the affair? for who will undertake to diſpute for ſuch principles? Satan himſelf pretends *kindneſs* and not *cruelty* in his inticements.

It is ſtrange to ſee how great and good men, have been *blinded* by this ſtratagem. Dr. *Mather* tell us, that Mr. *Elliot* publiſhed an anſwer to Mr. *Norcott* on *baptiſm*, and began it with theſe lines, viz. "The book ſpeaks with a "voice of a *lamb*, and I think the author is a *godly* tho' "erring *brother*; but he acts the cauſe of a *roaring lion*, "who by all crafty ways, ſeeketh to devour the poor *lambs* "of the flock of Chriſt." * Now the *lion* is praiſed for his *ſtately goings*, but who would dare to come near, or encounter with him, unleſs he had *David's* faith? Inſtead of that, each one is for keeping their diſtance, and endeavouring to ſecure themſelves and their children againſt the *terrible* beaſt. Even ſo great a champion as Mr. *Mitchel*, found his courage fail in this matter. For, when Mr. *Dunſtar*, preſident of *Cambridge* college, embraced the *baptiſt* principles in 1653, and "thought himſelf under ſome "obligation to bear his teſtimony in ſome ſermons, againſt "the adminiſtration of *baptiſm* to any *infant* whatſoever." † Mr. *Mitchel*, after he had been to talk with him, found that it cauſed him to *ſcruple infant baptiſm*, which he ſays, "Made me *fearful* to go needleſly to Mr. *D.* for me-"thought I found a *venom* and *poiſon*, in his inſinuations "and diſcourſes againſt *pædo-baptiſm*." ‡ And to ſecure himſelf againſt ſo great a danger, he ſays, "I reſolved al-"ſo on Mr. *Hooker's* principle, *That I would have an ar-*"*gument, able to remove a mountain, before I would re-*

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* *Elliot's* life p. 57. † *Mitchel's* life p. 67. ‡ ibid p. 69.

" *cede from, or appear againſt a truth or practice, received* " *among the faithful.*" * But how did he know that he was not *reſolving againſt the truth*, and not for it? We have his reaſons therefor under his own hand: when he had been to Mr. *Dunſter's*, Dec. 24. 1653, he ſays, † " After I came " from him, I had a ſtrange experience: I found hurrying " and preſſing ſuggeſtions againſt *pædo-baptiſm*, and dejec- " ted ſcruples and thoughts, whether the other way might " not be right, and *infant baptiſm*, an invention of men: " and whether I might with good conſcience baptize chil- " dren and the like. And theſe thoughts were darted " in with ſome impreſſion, and left a ſtrange confuſion " and ſickneſs upon my ſpirit. Yet methought, it was " not hard to diſcern that they were from the EVIL ONE. " *Firſt*, becauſe they were rather *injected*, hurrying ſug- " geſtions, than any deliberate thoughts, or bringing any " light with them. *Secondly*, becauſe they were *unrea-* " *ſonable*; interrupting me in my ſtudy for the ſabbath, " and putting my ſpirit into confuſion, ſo as I had much " ado, to do ought in my ſermon. It was not now a time " to ſtudy that matter; but when in the former part of " the week, I had given myſelf to that ſtudy, the more I " ſtudied it, the more clear and rational light I ſaw for " *pædo baptiſm*, but now theſe ſuggeſtions hurried me into " *ſcruples.*"

Tho' this may have paſſed for good reaſoning with many; yet ſhould a *baptiſt* miniſter own that he had very much *ſcrupled*, whether his way was right or not, but had concluded the *ſcruples* were from the *evil one*, becauſe they were attended with *confuſion* and *darkneſs*, rather than *deliberation* in his mind; and did not come by his own reaſonings, but by means of talking with a *great* and *good* ‡ man, which happened not to be in the right time of the week, but too near the *ſabbath*: and that therefore it was *reſolved*, that he would have an *argument able to remove a mountain*, before he would recede from a *practice* which had been *received as truth* among his faithful fathers. Alſo that he was *fearful* of going near the gentleman who had been inſtrumental of ſhaking his confidence concerning that old *practice*. If a *baptiſt* ſhould talk ſo, there would be enough ready to tell him, that it was his *driveing* again *conviction*, that cauſed ſuch confuſion and darkneſs

* *Mitchel's* Life p. 70. † p. 68. 69.

‡ For Mr. *Mitchel* eſteem'd and honored Mr. *Dunſter* as ſuch to his dying day, p. 70.

neſs in his mind; and we ſhould heared more about the baptiſts being *wilful* in their way than we have done yet.

The Lord gave this reaſon to *Iſrael*, why they ſhould not oppreſs a ſtranger, viz. *For ye know the heart of a ſtranger, ſeeing ye were ſtrangers in the land of Egypt.* And I find the truth of that word in the preſent caſe; for I have gone thro' the ſame *hurrying* and *darkneſs*, upon this point, which Mr. *Mitchel* deſcribes, and thought once that I had got clear of it, in the ſame way; and alſo felt the like *fear* of diſputing with others upon it, that he did. Neither was it any creature that ſtopt me at laſt, from going on in that way, No, but in my retired hours, this queſtion was put to my conſcience, (I believe) by him who made me, "where is it, and in what relation to the viſible "church do baptized infants ſtand, who are not *regenera-*"*ted*?" This I was not able to anſwer; for it was a ſettled point with me before (as it was with Mr. *Mitchel*) that none but *new-born* ſouls ought to come to the *Lords-Supper*; and yet *baptiſm* is the firſt ordinance in a *chriſtian profeſſion*, and his notion of a *middle way*, between the church and the world, I could not juſtify: ſo that I found the *mountain* to be on the other ſide of the queſtion; and if Mr. *Hooker*, or any others could have helped me to an *argument* able to *remove it*, I ſhould have gladly uſed it, rather than to be *turned about* again in this affair; but tho' I ſought diligently, by all means within my reach, for twelve months or more, yet I never could find ſuch an argument. *Solomon* ſays, *The heart knoweth its own bitterneſs*: and none but they who have experienced the like, can tell what I then endured; and inſtead of help from my brethren, they helped to increaſe the burden: for one would ſay, It was my liſtning to the *baptiſts*, that cauſed all this difficulty: while another would be as confident that it was the *fear of men* that kept me from coming out in *believers baptiſm*.

Often did I think of *Job's* words, *Were your ſoul in my ſouls ſtead, I could heap words upon you.* I ſee now that the chief thing that held my mind ſo long in ſuſpence, was not diſtinguiſhing as I ought between *men*, and the *rule itſelf*. For when I look'd into the *word*, I could read believers baptiſm plainly, and nothing plainly of bringing infants thereto; but when I turned to look among *men*, ſo many *good* ones would be brought up on one ſide, and *bad* ones on the other, and I ſaw ſo much of a wrong *temper* in my *baptiſt* brethren who had come out lately, that I ſaid

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in my heart, "I am afraid there is some *secret mischief* in "that principle." And I never could obtain deliverance in this matter, 'till I was brought to *cease from man*, both as to leave good men and bad men out of the question, and come to this single point; *Nevertheless, what saith the scripture?* And there I obtained as clear establishment about baptism, as any other point in religion. And what I have endured, has taught me the vast importance of the divine direction which we have, against *judging the counsels of others hearts*. What they say and do, we have a warrant to judge upon, and to labour to convince them where we think they are in the wrong: but to charge them with being *biassed* by corruption, if they don't presently yield to our arguments; as it is a violation of the law of God, so no tongue can express all the mischiefs which it has made among God's people, in all ages. And this admitting man for part of our *rule*, is the grand source of all the *abominations in the earth*.* For wherever this enemy creeps in among any denominations, it moves ministers and people to *slander* those who differ from them, and to have men's *persons in admiration* on their own side, *because of advantage*. Was it not this enemy which unawares moved Mr. *Blitchford* to say, "he found a venom and poison in the presidents insinu- "ations." When his church were so "vehement and "violent," against Mr. *Dunstar*, as to procure his removal, both from the *college* and from the *town*, he could see the evil there; and told his brethren "That more of light "and less heat would be better," for he esteemed his *tutor* to be a "*worthy* and a *godly* man." p. 68. Had Mr. *Dunstar* fallen into any *scandal* afterward, is it not as likely we should have often heard of him, as we have of other *scandalous baptists*? But since it was otherwise, ministers have been so cautious of speaking of these things, that I suppose thousands,

* The first part of the *Popes creed* is the same with *protestants*, and the first step he takes off from truth is, admitting the authority of *apostolical tradition*: and the next article is in these words, viz. "I do admit the holy scriptures in the *same sense* that the "*holy mother-church* doth, whose business it is to *judge* of the "true sense and interpretation of them; and I will interpret "them according to the unanimous consent of the *fathers*." *Gordon's* geography in his description of the religion of *Italy*, p. 177. And upon these *two pillars*, supported by *civil power*; stands the whole fabric of *superstition*, which would as certainly *fall*, if they were removed, as ever *Dagon's* temple did in *Samson's* day.

thouſands, who have uſed his *verſion* of the *pſalms* in their worſhip, never heard nor thought that the principal man, who compoſed them, openly renounced *inſant baptiſm* ſoon after; tho' they have often heard the *mad-men* of *Munſter*, caſt as a reproach upon thoſe who have no more concern with them, than their accuſers have with the *builders of Babel*.

Mr. *Fiſh* proceeds with the like *caution*, when he has occaſion to mention the preſident who ſucceeded Mr *Dunſtar*, in order to ſhew what regard the ancient church in *Plymouth* had for *learning*, he brings in "The great pains "they took to obtain the learned and eminent Mr. *Charles* "*Chauncy* (afterwards preſident of *Cambridge* college) of "whoſe ſettlement with them, they were diſappointed." p. 82. But he never gives the leaſt hint, that the only reaſon given, for his not ſettling there, (in the account he takes this out of) is, that he held *baptiſm* "ought *only* to "be *by dipping or plunging the whole body under water*," which appeared ſo neceſſary to Mr. *Chauncy*, that "he did "not ſee light" to ſettle in a church where another practiced *ſprinkling*, tho' he had liberty to act according to his own mind. * This account of what was acted but 8 years after *Boſton* was ſettled, would not anſwer, for one who was laboring to prove, that the holding *dipping* to be neceſſary in baptiſm, was a *new* notion of ſome *ignorant, rigid* people. If this be a fair uſe of *learning*, which he talks ſo much of, what can be unfair?

This reminds me of another of Mr. *F's* exclamations; after he has ſpoken ſo much of the ſeparates and baptiſts, he ſays, "What then is like to become of the *cauſe* that "brought our pious fore-fathers into this land?" p. 182. Anſwer, the *cauſe* they came here for, was a *reformation according to the word of God*, and the firſt churches, both of *Plymouth* and *Boſton*, expreſsly *covenanted* before God to embrace *further light from his word*, as it ſhould be opened to them; and governor *Winſlow* tells us, that Mr. *Robinſon*, paſtor of the *Plymouth people*, "charged them before God "and his bleſſed angels," to act according to their *covenant*; "for he was very confident, the Lord had more "truth and light yet, to break forth out of his *holy* word."† What an injury then is done to their character, as well as to our own ſouls, if we *limit* things to what they had *attained*, as if they did not mean to act as they ſaid?

Many

* Appendix to *Robbins's* ſermon p. 5, 6.
† New-England chronology, p. 89. 90.

Many ministers in our country will tell people, that a strong confidence that their souls are in a safe state, is hurtful; and that they must think that, *possibly* they are *not right*, in order to *examine* themselves: but in this case, all art must be used to prevent any *scruples* concerning infant baptism, before they *examine* it; so that they may not look into the bible, to see whether this principle is right or not, but only to find something, to prove it to be right, and to fortify them against the *horrible errors* of the baptists. And if any are *resolved* still to go on in that way, I leave them with Him who is able to convince them of the evil of such conduct: but if any are desirous to hear *further of this matter*, I would give them a few more of my thoughts, upon our author's manner of handling the scriptures, in this controversy.

He allows the *baptists* a place among the *churches of Christ*, and that they have "doubtless a number of godly "persons among them," but says, "We *must think* they "are in a grievous error, as to the matter in dispute "between *them* and *us*." p. 96. And he directly appairs to the *promise* in Acts 2. 39. where he would have us take notice that, "'tis not said that the promise *shall* be to your children: but the promise IS to your children," so it is, and *as many* as heard the *call*, *and gladly received the promise*, *were baptized*, *and the same day were added to the church*, *even such as should be saved*. And there is not a word of the *baptizing any* but *such*, in the whole context. Mr. *Fish* says this would put believers children upon "a "*level* with the *heathen*, who also shall be interested in "the promise, upon *their* believing." p. 97. And will he pretend that any are interested in the promise of *remission of sins* and the *gift of the holy Ghost*, beside true *believers*? He says this is the promise made to *Abraham*: let it be so. *Paul* tells us, that Christ was made a *curse for us*, that the *blessing of Abraham* might come on the gentiles, *through Jesus Christ*; that we might *receive the promise of the spirit thro' faith*. The *blessing* comes *thro' Christ*, and is *received* only *by faith*. A few verses forward *Paul* says, *The scripture hath concluded* ALL *under sin*, *that the promise might be given to them that believe*: and concludes the chapter with saying, IF *ye be Christ's*, THEN *are ye Abraham's seed*, *and heirs* ACCORDING *to* THE PROMISE. Gal. 3, 13, 14, 22, 29. *The promise*, is of the *gift of righteousness*, and *abundance of grace*, which is only *received by faith*; how vain then are all the pretences, that *any* are *heirs of*

promise

promise, but *believers*? The complaint against setting all men upon a *level*, in their natural state, is as old as *christianity* itself: for the very work of the *messenger* who came before Christ's face, was to *level* all outward distinctions in the world; and nothing was more offensive to the *Jews* than the freedom which our Lord discovered towards *publicans and sinners*; and the *Jews* conceit that they had a better claim to *the promise*, than *such persons*, was the grand obsticle in the way of their *believing in Jesus*; and so was the *bar* that shut them out of the *kingdom of heaven*. And what less than this are those doing, who conceit that *natural birth*, or any thing *done by creatures*, gives *them* or *theirs* any better claim to that *kingdom* than *other sinners*? *Paul* was taught the perniciou effects of that *conceit*, and therefore engaged against it with all his might, and proved to the *Romans*, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were *all under sin*: to the *Ephesians* that, *We* ALL *were by nature the children of wrath*, EVEN *as others*; and to the *Galatians*, (as was just observed) that *all* were *concluded under sin, that the promise might be given to them that believe*. And the very occasion of his laboring as he did with the *Galatians* was because of some who *desired to make a fair shew in the flesh*, by introducing the *national* plan under the *christian* name: but tho' *Peter* and *Barnabas* were *carried away* at first with this scheme; yet he *withstood them to the face*, and shewed them that this was *building again the things which once they destroyed*; which *things* he expressly points out to be the *difference* between *Jews by nature, and sinners of the Gentiles*. Gal. 2. 15.

What then shall we think of Mr. *Fish*, who declares that the promise "remains in full force to your children, "upon *your* becoming *christians*; *as* it did while *Jews*?" And again that the *gospel charter*, "*secures* the *blessings* of "the covenant to children, in the *same breath* that it "does *to the parents*." p. 31. 100. If this is not *building* the *middle wall of partition* between the *children of professors*, and *others*, I desire to know what is. That *wall* which Christ has *broken down*, (Eph. 2. 14.) and his apostles *destroyed* it; yet men have got to building it again. And we are told, that 'tis for very good ends too; one of which is to keep children under "the faithful authorative watch "and discipline of the church." p. 99. These are fine *words*; but what is there in it, in our day more than empty words? They tell us of some *actings* of this nature in former times, but now they are only great *swelling words*.

But

But should they attempt to bring them into *action* now, Mr. *Fish* owns in the same page that, "The jurisdiction "of the church reaches no further than to her *members*." And he elsewhere disowns the name of a *half-way covenant*, p. 92. therefore they must be dealt with as *complete* members: and if they will come into *action* upon this plan, then people will see where they are, and no longer be abused with the name of *congregational* churches: for this is as truly a *national plan*, as ever was in *England* or *Judea*: and then he must have his own question returned, "What "is like to become of the *cause* that brought our honourable "fore fathers into this land?"

In order to shew the dreadful effects of our principles, Mr. F. says, we not only deprive our children of the churches watch, but implicitly bid them to *go and serve other gods*. This he says is the consequence, "If I am not out in my reasoning. p. 99. A caveat well put in; for it would make many suspect him to be out of his *reason*, as well as out in his *reasoning*, to suppose that, the not treating persons *as* Christ's servants 'till they gave evidence of their *being* such, implied a *bidding* them *serve other gods*. "Again (says he) by denying their children the *covenant* "and *seal*, they do *eventually* deprive them of the *bible* — "of a *preached gospel*, and *all appointed* means of grace:" and cites, Rom. 3. 1, 2. to prove it, and says, "Upon the "whole, may it not be said, of their church, that it is like "a flock without *lambs*, a vineyard without *seed*, an or- "chard without a nursery? &c. p. 100.

I would answer these queries by putting others. Does *learning* consist in *words* or in ideas? And does not every *husbandman* know, that *lambs* will become *sheep*, and a nursery, *appletrees* without any other *change* but *natural* growth? and do persons become Christ's *sheep* in such a way? He said to a ruler of the *Jews*, That which is born *of the flesh, is flesh*: marvel not that I said unto thee, *ye must be born again*. And have we *masters* in *New-England*, that don't *know these things*? As to the bible and other means for conversion, who will say that children may not attend those means as well *without* sprinkling as with? And *Paul* assures us, that the *chief advantage* of the circumcised children lay therein; and none but such might enjoy those means, in the national church. The apostles first commission to preach, was *limited* to the *house of Israel*: but since the *middle wall of partition* is broken down, the gospel is preached freely to *every creature*. And to our

 author's

author's notion of *securing* these privileges to children by an outward *seal*; we have proof enough in our land, that it is not putting water on childrens heads that will either *secure* their adherence to *sound doctrine*, or *secure* divine blessings to their *unbelieving* souls.

Many, in order to make out some singular advantage to baptized infants, will reach forward to another world, and say that if they die in infancy they have good hope for them, but for others they have none; unless it be from the *uncovenanted mercy* of God. I wish they would explain what they mean: if they mean his *sovereign mercy*, I confess all my hopes for my self, as well as children are derived from thence. To suppose that the *work done*, upon the child, *conveys grace*, is *naked popery*, and to pretend to tell of a difference in their future state, as the *certain* consequence of any *outward* performance of creatures, is not *two pence* better. * Some in our parts have lately said, they could not pray for unbaptized infants; and yet at the same time pretend to be servants of him, who came to *seek and save that which was lost*. I don't charge Mr. *F.* with this; only take this occasion to testify against such abominations. Others who are not so corrupt, say we must do our duty to our children, and leave the event with God; but the difficulty is to prove this to be duty. All must allow that infant baptism is not *expressed* in scripture, 'tho many think it is *implied* therein; but we have found a very great difference between the *jewish* and *christian* constitution of the church, and in particular as to hearing the *oracles* of God. What godly people have mainly fixed upon, as the advantage of bringing children to this ordinance is, the *obligation* which 'tis supposed both parents and children are laid under thereby.

Mr. *F.* says, "Are not the reins of family government "and discipline, thrown too much upon the neck of chil-

"dren

* We have a book intitled "The baptism of infants a reasonable "service, founded upon scripture, and undoubted *apostolic tradi-* "*tion*;" which was first printed in *London*, and has been lately reprinted in *Boston*, which many of our ministers have been fond of. The author of that piece, gives it as his mind, that all who die in infancy will have a state of *probation* in another world, and that those who are baptized will have a *better* state for trial than others. Here is a *sacrament* among protestants *founded* partly on *tradition*, and *a state* is told of in the other world between *hell* and a fixed state of happiness in *heaven*, where infants are to have advantage by what ministers do here, O! tell it not in *Italy*, publish it not in the streets of *Rome*!

" dren (there being no covenant *bonds* to hold them) ?" And " is not family prayer sadly neglected among the bap-" tists ? and are they not commonly defective in their re-" ligious observation of the *Lord's-day* ?" p. 10.

Answer, It is to be lamented that these evils so much prevail in all parts of the land, among all denominations ; but I have reason to think there is a considerable reformation, on these accounts, among the baptists lately. O may there be much more ! A few considerations on *family prayer*, which I thought duty to publish two years ago, were at their desire printed at *Newport*, and have been kindly received in that *colony* ; for which I am bound to give thanks to God. And I hope my fathers and brethren, will yet be more engaged by an agreeable walk, to cut off occasion from them who desire occasion, and give evidence to all, that believers baptism has no natural tendency to make people neglect the duties of private or public religion : The joining of these evils with the very name of a *baptist*, has long been an engine to guard peoples minds against looking into their true sentiments ; whereas there is no more natural relation between those evils, and our principle about *baptism*, than there is between true *learning* and a *haughty persecuting* behaviour, which have often been put together on the other hand. *

Upon a close view, I am fully convinced that our fathers were greatly mistaken in this matter, and the effects plainly evidence it ; for, 1. How often can we hear these children of the church making remarks on the loose walk of professors,

* The sentiments of our *baptist* brethren in *England*, who have had long experience in these things, as they were published in a *letter of advice* to their brethern, from an assembly of 15 churches, met at *Burton* in *Gloucestershire* Aug. 16. 1765, I will give a little extract from.—" Take care of stretching your family wor-" ship to an unreasonable length, or performing it unseasonably : " let it not be defer'd too late in the morning, lest your hearts " should be engaged in the hurries of business, and entangled " in the cares of the world ; nor put it off till the last thing in " the evening, lest you should be overcome with drowsiness, and " thus yawn out a prayer, instead of groaning out one.

" Be strict in observing the weekly day of rest, and not content-" ed with attending upon public worship, let it be the Sabbath of " the Lord in all your dwellings : Keep your children and ser-" vants much under your eye : insist upon their remembering " something of what they have heard : put them upon reading " the scriptures ; what is above their capacities explain to them, " and close the day with recommending them to God.

feſſors, but if they are turned to their own walk, they are ready to reply, *I am no profeſſor*; plainly ſuppoſing that their *obligation* to regard divine rule, depends on their *own act*; for they naturally imagine that they have as good a right to act for themſelves *now*, as their parents had to act for them in *infancy*. *Paul*, when ſpeaking to *heathens*, reminded them that we are the *offspring of God*, and therefore are under *indiſpenſible obligations* to *ſeek him*, and act as *dependent* creatures on *him*, *in* whom *we live*, *and move*, *and have our being*. Act. 17—27. 29. And he urges on *chriſtians*, the importance of giving *more earneſt heed*, to the things revealed in the goſpel, from the conſideration of the *greatneſs* of the things in themſelves; the *evidence* they come with; the *importance* of them to us, and the *account* we muſt give for them, or for our *neglect* of them. Heb. 2. 1—3. Theſe are ſtriking conſiderations indeed: but to fix the *obligation* upon an *act* that is never expreſſed in the whole bible, has rather a tendency to guard againſt conviction, than to cauſe a true ſenſe of duty; eſpecially if we obſerve, 2. That when people have a few *outſide* things, they are apt to think that they are, either *ſafe*, or in a *fair way* for it: which is exactly the foundation error of the *Phariſees*, who were *blind*, becauſe they did not FIRST cleanſe that which is *within*, that the *outſide* might be *clean alſo*. Matt. 23. 26. Many have ſeen the danger of this, who at the ſame time did not ſee how their principles would lead to it. Mr. *Willard* of *Boſton*, after a long diſcourſe upon *renewing covenant*, in the year 1680. wherein were included *parents* and their *children*, yet ſays, "To confide in theſe *outward* enjoyments, as if they were "*real* aſſurances of God's complacency, is not *faith* but "*preſumption*:—And yet, ſays he, what more common "then for the children of men thus to *delude* themſelves "with ſuch opinions? To truſt in church privileges, as it "is the *moſt dangerous*, ſo it is the *moſt common* miſchief "and miſery of a people in viſible covenant: God calls "it, *to truſt in lying words*, Jer. 74. And it was a ground "of the *Jews* ruin." p. 63, 64. What then are men doing, who would labour to get perſons into the church, before they have any proper evidence that they have *firſt truſted in Chriſt*!

Mr. *F.* appears a little more cautious of aſſerting things againſt the baptiſt, than againſt ſeparates. He ſays, "Let "me be corrected, if I charge them wrongfully. Is not a "*learned*, *able miniſtry*, too lightly ſet by, and very "rarely to be found, among thoſe churches?" p. 101.

Anſwer,

Answer, several who have formerly sent their sons to college, have been disappointed, as the clergy have found means to draw them over to their party; which has discouraged others from sending their sons. And the baptists in general have been so much abused, by those who boast of their *learning*, that 'tis not strange if many are prejudiced against such men; yet they have had some that the world calls learned men, from the beginning; and lately have begun a *college* of their own, which bids fair to increase; * but I hope they may never imagine to confine Christ or his church, to that, or any other human school, for ministers.

In order to shew how poorly furnished our churches are with *teachers*, Mr. *F.* tells a story of his conversing with one of them, who held that those words, *Drink ye all of it*, proved that they must eat and drink *up all* the elements, that are set apart for the *Lord's supper*: and represents it as the *common practice* among our churches. p. 101. In answer to this. I can tell him truly, that I have been acquainted with a great part of the *baptist* in *New-England*, these 18 years, from *Connecticut* river to *Piscataqua*, and I never heard of such a *practice* among *any* of them, 'till I heard it from his book: therefore I leave him to instruct or correct his acquaintance, but I would have him get more *learning*, before he attempts again to represent those he don't know.

Having given such an account of the baptists, he concludes, that many *good things* are *lost*, and no good thing gained by going over to them, unless theirs is the *only scriptural mode*. Upon this he says, "Let us *impartially* examine the scripture." p. 102. And he goes on to examine the text, that speaks of our Lord's going *out of the water*, so *impartially*, that he says, "This text affords not "the *least shadow* of proof for *plunging*." p. 105. This conclusion he draws from Mat. 4. 25. and Luke 2. 4. where the word *apo*, is translated, *from*, and from whence he concludes that the other text means no more than *from* the water. Now let us not jest with scripture, but we'll suppose a *critick*, like our author, had been at *New-London* when he came there to get his book printed, and had asked, whence it came? and he had replied, *From* Stonington. Then, says the *critick*, you have not been *into*

* The *charter* for it was granted in *February* 1764, by the general court of *Rhode-Island* colony: and Mr. *James Manning* of *Warren*, is now president thereof.

into the town. Yes, says he I came *from* my own house in the further part of the town. What lodgings, then, (says the other) have you *by* your house? for I perceive you did not come *out of* it, but only *from* it?

If this be the learning which Mr. *F.* speaks so much of, he is welcome to it all: yet after he has spent eight pages in this *impartial* examination, (wherein he says, "We "choose the mode of *sprinkling* or *washing* as most decent," p. 110) he concludes that he has "made it "appear, *beyond contradiction*, that *plunging* in baptism, "is no ways *essential*:" and says they are, "*fairly* licen-"ced,—even by those very texts (as they stand in the ori-"ginal) upon which they rely." p. 111.

I confess it might seem ill manners, to proceed in a dispute, after a person is *fairly silenced*; yet I remember they used to allow the *Indians* to ask questions, after they had been preaching to them: I shall therefore take that liberty.

And *first*, I would ask this teacher how he came to act as he says [redacted] *learned enemies*, who *make havock of the church*, do? whose language according to his own account, p. 176, is, "You don't rightly understand your bible: 'tis *thus* and "*so* in the *original*; the meaning of *this* and *that* text, is "not as you take it; but just the reverse, or very different." He asks whether we must not run back to the *standing churches* for help in such a case? I believe not; but I will tell him what I have once done. When the ministers of *Norwich* and one from *Preston*, joined and made some *additions* to Mr. *Dickinson's dialogue*, and got it reprinted, I sent one of them to Dr. *Gill*, who had answered the dialogue before; but when he observed that they have added in page 5, that "St. *Irenæus*, who lived about 114 years after Christ; —says in his epistle ad Rom. lib. 5. "The "church received a tradition from the apostles, to admi-"nister baptism to little children or infants." The doctor ordered an advertisement to be inserted at the end of one of his books, wherein, after mentioning this passage, he "*charges* it as a *forgery*, there being *no such passage* in all the "works of *Irenæus*; and Dr. *Gill* defies the above gen-"tleman, and the whole literary world to produce or point "out, *any* such passage in *Irenæus*, or *any* book or chap-"ter of his, of such a title, in which this pretended pas-"sage is said to be." And with this, he sent me another book, wherein he declares to the world, that all the *Greek Lexicons* which he ever saw make the primary sense of the word *baptize*, to be to *dip*; and to *wash* by consequence:

but

but that it never means to *pour* or *sprinkle*; and if there are any *lexicons* which give a different sense of the word, he desires they may be pointed out.

A *second* question I would ask is, how our author and his brethren came to depart in this case, from the general rule, of *interpreting obscure* places by those which are plain? It is well known that the meaning of words is most plain, where they are used in their *literal* sense, and commonly, but part of their meaning is refer'd to, when used in a *figurative* way. As for instance, the metaphor of a *thief*, and of an *unjust judge* is refer'd to by our Lord, to shew the *suddenness* of his coming, and the *prevalence* of *importunity*: but what blasphemer will dare to apply the whole meaning of those words either to the Father or to the Son? yet in the case before us, all arts are used to *darken* texts which speak of *baptism* in the *literal* sense, and then we are turned to places where the word is used in a *figurative* way, in order to decide its true meaning. The *overwhelming* sorrow of Christ; and his disciples being *filled* with the holy Ghost, are called *baptisms*; and Mr. *F.* would point us only to the *way* or *manner* of its *coming*, and not to their being *filled* or *overwhelmed* therein, and then says, "there "was *nothing* in either of those *baptisms*, that so much as "*look'd like dipping.*" p. 107. What! *nothing like it!* when in a plain prophecy of Christ, 'tis said, *The waters are come in unto my soul;—I am come into deep waters, where the floods* OVERFLOW *me*, Psalm 69. 1, 2. Thus he denies what *is* in the bible; but at other times would have us read what never *was* there: for in the same page he refers us to Mr. *Dickinson's* dialogue, who in speaking of *Israel's* being *baptized* to *Moses*, leaves out all the circumstances of their going *into*, and coming *out of* the sea, and having the waters on *each hand*, and the cloud *over them*: I say, he leaves all these out, and then tells us of the rain "from the cloud," which the bible speaks nothing of. Thus these men who are so much confin'd to what *they* have *written*, in their teaching, can *read* to the people what *God* never *wrote* in his word!

My *third* question is this; Can they find one instance that God ever instituted an ordinance without shewing the *manner* how it should be perform'd? will they say that Christ appointed the *matter* of the ordinance of the supper to be bread and wine, but left the church to *decree rites and ceremonies* concerning the *manner* of its performance? The initiation ordinance of the jewish church was a *bloody* sign

ſign, and the learned tell us that it took its name from the *manner* of its performance, as the word *circumciſion* ſignifies "to cut all round." * Now if any had taken a fancy then, that the ſubſtance of the ordinance was its being a *bloody* ſign, and that the *mode* was no great matter; and thereupon had attempted to adminiſter it by *pricking* inſtead of *cutting*, or by cutting *acroſs* inſtead of cutting *all round*, would that have been *circumciſion*? I preſume none will ſay it would. Neither (I believe) will they pretend, that cutting any other part of the body would have done beſide the *foreſkin*. And who will venture to contradict the bible, and ſay, Jeſus was *leſs faithful* than *Moſes*, in appointing the orders of his houſe? Heb. 3. 5, 6.

And let me aſk thoſe who hold that if *water* is uſed in the ſacred name 'tis baptiſm, tho' it be done by *ſprinkling* or *pouring*, whether they think *Paul* underſtood what he ſaid when he calls baptiſm a *burial*? Rom. 6. 4, 5. Indeed Mr. *Dickinſon* ſays, "It is moſt evident that this text "has no reference at all to,—any particular *mode* of ad- "miniſtring that ordinance, but the plain manifeſt ſcope "of the words, is to ſhew us our *obligation* by *baptiſm*, "unto a conformity to the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, "by *dying unto ſin*, and *riſing again unto newneſs of life*." Anſwer, 'tis readily granted that this is his ſcope; but do they ſuppoſe that learned *Paul* had ſuch a ſcope with him as to uſe *words* without any reference to their true *meaning*? Common people know, that when they *bury* a man they never expect to ſee him return to his *old way of living* again; and that when they *plant* corn they expect its next appearance will be by a *new growth*: and how ſtricking from hence is the argument to engage *baptized* believers to walk in *newneſs of life*? But now, forſooth, *Paul* muſt be thought to apply the words *buried* and *planted* to baptiſm, when *ſprinkled* and *waſhed*, would have done as well or better! ſuch advances have men made in *learning* ſince *Paul's* day!

Before we leave this point, I would aſk theſe learned gentlemen how they came to know which *part* of the body they ſhould apply water to? Circumciſion was in a *ſecret part*, and they often tell us that baptiſm comes in its room. If *waſhing* be baptiſm, Jeſus *waſhed* his diſciples *feet*, but I don't read that he waſhed their *face*: how then did they come to know that *ſprinkling* the *face* was baptiſm?

However

* Cruden's Concordance at the word circumciſion.

However I must stand no longer here, for Mr. [illegible] says, to be *consistent*, we must "unchurch all the *christian world* "except *ourselves*; yet, says he, as our religion does not "oblige us, so we are not disposed to treat *them* with like "severity." p. 96. Here then, if we will take his word for it, he and his brethren have much more *charity* than the poor *rigid* baptists: but as this has long been an engine to keep people in darkness, I shall, as help may be offered, freely and distinctly give my thoughts upon it.

1, What do men mean by *unchurching* others? *Paul* would have *every man fully perswaded in his own mind*; and act accordingly, so as not to *condemn himself in that thing which he alloweth*. And he shews, that he which *doubteth* whether a thing be right or not, and yet does it, is *damned* or *condemned* therefor. Rom. 14. 5, 22, 23. Yet modern *charity* will *condemn* all who dare to think and act contrary to the established religion. Every soul that ventures to see with its own eyes; so far as they discover and act upon truth, they like *Noah* do therein condemn all the world who act contrary thereto; which renews the old complaint, *Thou reproachest us also*. And what then? Mr. [illegible] condemns us as much as we do him. No, says he, we are not *obliged* nor *disposed* to treat them with like *severity*. But if we read on, we shall find he has told the world that he has proved *beyond contradiction* that we are wrong, and has *fairly silenced* us, and therefore has warned all not to hear us any more: and what separate or baptist in *New-England*, has done more or so much as this toward unchurching any other sect whatsoever?

Will he admit any into his community without he thinks they are baptized; or without they will conform to the *orders* of his church? I believe not. And if we have not the same liberty, where is liberty of conscience gone? If he thinks our consciences are erroneous; we are as fully perswaded his is so; and we are labouring to convince each other: and does not he unchurch us, as much as we do him? Indeed he gives it in his preface, as a great reason of his writing, that *two thirds* of his people have left him: but that only proves we have been more successful than he has: and does that excite his envy? All unscriptural *methods* to gain a *party* ought to be exposed and condemned; that is what each side have taken their turns to labour upon: and has not one as good a right to do so as another? Those who *creep into houses*, and *resist the truth*, God says, *Their folly shall be manifest unto all men*: so that they

who are upon the truth, have vastly the advantage of those who resist it, and need not fear a being unchurched by them. And is not our author somewhat *inconsistent* with himself, while he is telling what we must do to be *consistent*? for he tells abundance of what *weak* and *ignorant* teachers we have; and yet anon they are so *crafty* that he durst not venture his people to go near them, lest they should be *deceived* by them. Therefore, 2. Does not the core of all this difficulty lie in this, that common people claim as good a right to judge and act for themselves in matters of religion, as civil rulers or the learned clergy? It has a *shew* both of *wisdom* and *humility* to appoint those who know more than we do, to judge and act for us; and it has more than a shew of them, often to do so in temporal things: but in religion it is a most dangerous snare. Fathers have a right to see and act for their children in many cases; but in this matter Jesus says, *call no man your father upon the earth*. Mat. 23. 9. And *Paul* spends a whole chapter in labours to expose and guard against this very snare. Col. 2. He speaks highly of the *order* of that church, and of the *stedfastness* of their *faith in Christ*, and exhorts them to *walk in him* AS they *received him*. And all saints know that when they received Christ, they had no creature to see for them, but each soul acted as singly towards God, as if there had not been another person in the world: well says the apostle, *So walk in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith,* AS YE *have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you thro' philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily: and ye are* COMPLETE *in him, which is the* HEAD *of all principality and power*. Now if each saint is *complete* in him which is the *Head* of all *wisdom* and *power*, then they have no need of *philosophers* to see for them, nor of *princes* to give them *power* to act for God: but they freely *confess* with their *mouths*, what they *believe* in their *hearts*, and so their *hearts are comforted, being knit together in love*, and are *built up together*, as *they have been taught*. And as those saints had received the substance of what was shadowed forth in *circumcision*, and had declared in their *baptism*, that they were *dead* to the *body of sin*, and to the worship of the *worldly sanctuary*; the apostle says, Wherefore if ye be *dead with Christ*, from the *rudiments of the world*; why as tho' *living in the world* are ye subject to ordinances,—after the *commandments*

mandments and doctrines of men: which things indeed have a *shew of wisdom and humility.*

Now as this warning was openly given, it could not do for men to act against it in plain terms; yet those who were *vainly puft up by their fleshly minds*, conceited that the ordinances which Jesus had instituted after he had *blotted out* the old *hand writing*, were too few and plain, and the worship too spiritual to consist with that great maxim, That christian privileges are greater than jewish privileges were; therefore their *philosophy* was set to work upon the *deceitful* line of making jewish ordinances, *shadows* of christian ordinances, instead of owning them to be *shadows* of *spiritual* and *inward realities*: and so making *Abraham's household* which first constituted that church, a *shadow* of christians *natural* offspring, instead of viewing it to be a *shadow* of the *household of God*, which constitutes the gospel church. Eph. 2. 19, 20. And having by this art got the *relicks* of that old covenant which Jesus had *blotted out* and *nailed to his cross*, it hath made room for the exercise of all their learning to write upon it, and contend about it ever since. Mr. *Dickinson* says, "The patent sealed by *baptism* "is (so to speak) the very same parchment that was given "to *Abraham*;—there is nothing altered, but the seal only." *Dialogue*, p. 17. And Mr. *F.* plainly holds things in the same line; and therein, he and his brethren appear to be in a fair way to bring that upon themselves which they would charge upon us. For on the same *parchment* it was written, than *none but the sons of* Aaron *should minister in the sanctuary*; and it has already been proved that when they came out of *Babylon*, those *children of the priests*, who could not find the *register* of their *genealogy* drawn from *Aaron*, were as *polluted put from the priesthood*. And the christian church has been thro' a more dreadful captivity since the apostle's days, than that of the *Jews* in *Babylon*; therefore, according to this rule, all ministers who can't shew their *registers* of an uninterupted *succession* from the apostles, must as polluted be put out of their places, and then I believe in my heart, there would not be one minister left upon the face of the earth. It will not do here, to fly to *don't knows* and *suppositions*, because we have renounced the doctrine, of *ignorance being the mother of devotion.*

What poor work then are our ministers like to make of it; for when they come to trace their line back, the *Lord-Bishops* claim a higher title, and an older right to this *parchment* than they, and are now making attempts to over-run

who are upon the truth, have vaſtly the advantage of thoſe who reſiſt it, and need not fear a being unchurched by them. And is not our author ſomewhat *inconſiſtent* with himſelf, while he is telling what we muſt do to be *conſiſtent*? for he tells abundance of what *weak* and *ignorant* teachers we have; and yet anon they are ſo *craſty* that he durſt not venture his people to go near them, leſt they ſhould be *deceived* by them. Therefore, 2. Does not the core of all this difficulty lie in this, that common people claim as good a right to judge and act for themſelves in matters of religion, as civil rulers or the learned clergy? It has a *ſhew* both of *wiſdom* and *humility* to appoint thoſe who know more than we do, to judge and act for us; and it has more than a ſhew of them, often to do ſo in temporal things: but in religion it is a moſt dangerous ſnare. Fathers have a right to ſee and act for their children in many caſes; but in this matter Jeſus ſays, *call no man your father upon the earth.* Mat. 23. 9. And *Paul* ſpends a whole chapter in labours to expoſe and guard againſt this very ſnare. Col. 2. He ſpeaks highly of the *order* of that church, and of the *ſtedfaſtneſs* of their *faith in Chriſt*, and exhorts them to *walk in him* AS they *received him.* And all ſaints know that when they received Chriſt, they had no creature to ſee for them, but each ſoul acted as ſingly towards God, as if there had not been another perſon in the world: well ſays the apoſtle, *So walk in him: rooted and built up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the faith,* AS YE *have been taught, abounding therein with thankſgiving. Beware leſt any man ſpoil you thro' philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt: for in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the God-head bodily: and ye are* COMPLETE *in him, which is the* HEAD *of all principality and power.* Now if each ſaint is *complete* in him which is the *Head* of all *wiſdom* and *power*, then they have no need of *philoſophers* to ſee for them, nor of *princes* to give them *power* to act for God: but they freely *confeſs* with their *mouths*, what they *believe* in their *hearts*, and ſo their *hearts are comforted, being knit together in love*, and are *built up together*, as *they have been taught.* And as thoſe ſaints had received the ſubſtance of what was ſhadowed forth in *circumciſion*, and had declared in their *baptiſm*, that they were *dead* to the *body of ſin*, and to the worſhip of the *worldly ſanctuary*; the apoſtle ſays, Wherefore if ye be *dead with Chriſt*, from the *rudiments of the world*; why as tho' *living in the world* are ye ſubject to ordinances,—after the *commandments*

mandments and doctrines of men: which things indeed have a *shew of wisdom and humility.*

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What poor work then are our ministers like to make of it; for when they come to trace their line back; the *Lord-Bishops* claim a higher title, and an older right to this *parchment* than they, and are now making attempts to over-run

over-run them. And tho' *episcopacy* has got as many or more orders of office than were among the *priests* and *levites*, yet instead of a *high priest*, they have a *secular prince* as their head. And they formerly *separated* from the *pope*, who was set up to answer to the *high priest* in the old *patent*: and when we come to him, he has such a *voluntary humility*, that he must *worship angels*, in order to get them to go to Jesus for him. And what an awful *succession* is here left between private members, and Jesus their glorious head?

Therefore says *Paul*, *Let no man judge you,—let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility,—And not holding the head from which all the body has nourishment.* Col. 2. 16,—19. *Peter* and other apostles to whom the *keys* were given to open the mysteries that were contained under those antient types, assure us that *Aaron* was a type of Jesus Christ, and his children a type of Christ's children, who are born of the spirit; and *Peter* says to such, ye also as *lively* stones, are built up a *spiritual house*, an *holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. 2. 5. And now we will turn our opponents own arguments back to where they belong. No *strangers* or *bastards* were allowed to come into God's sanctuary; where then is any room allowed for unregenerate persons, be they great or small, in this *spiritual house*? God says of the *new covenant*, when the *old* one *vanished away*, They shall *all know me* from the least to the greatest. Heb. 8. 11.

Again, these ministers often tell of *David*'s error in putting the *ark* into a new cart which was drawn by oxen, instead of laying it on the priests shoulders; but in this light, what will become of their *invented schemes*, supported and drawn by *earthly powers*, instead of resting the cause of *truth* where *Paul* did, *in* the *church*, which is the *pillar* and *ground* of it; or where Peter did on the shoulders of this *holy priest-hood*? Saints are often called *priests*, but ministers as distinguished from other christians, are never once as I can find, called priests, in all the new-testament. Men's *carts*, both *new* ones and *old* ones are *shaking* at this day, which is a token that they will all be *removed*, as things that are *made*, that those things which *cannot be shaken may remain.* Even Christ's *supreme* power to govern all, and to call whom he pleaseth out of the world unto himself, and the *subordinate* power which he hath given to them to confess him in the world, and open-

ly to join in his worship, and to call and constitute in office such men as he has qualified therefor, and to remove from office such as act contrary to his divine rules, without dependence on any other power. This I believe is the *kingdom which cannot be moved*; and is certainly the foundation which the fathers of this country built upon; and those who have now got upon another footing may pass the fathers sepulchres as much as they please, yet their foundation will be *overflown with a flood*: and the *wood hay* and *stubble* of such as are on the *sure foundation* will soon be *burnt up*: *but themselves shall be saved*; *yet so as by fire*. This leads me, 3. To observe that tho' 'tis an incredible thing with many, that good men should err so far as to change that, which an ordinance took its name from; or that those who practice so, can have the divine presence: yet we have plain proof of both in the divine oracles.

It was God's express command, that three times in the year all the males in his antient church, should appear before him; the last of which times was at the feast of *tabernacles*, which took its name from the *mode* which he ordered it to be kept in, viz. That they should dwell in booths or *tabernacles* all the time of the feast. But soon after *Israel* had got settled in *Canaan*, they altered this *mode*, and it was not recovered again for about a thousand years; namely from *Joshua's* time, 'till after their *habitation* had lain *desolate* 70 years. Neh. 8. 17. *Solomon* dedicated the temple at this feast, tho' as they had dropt the *manner* of keeping of it, which it took its name from, so it was not there

[illegible] fulfilled

* Were it worth while we might compare notes with these ministers as to an external *succession*; for Mr. *Hanserd Knolly* and Mr. *John Miles*, were educated at the same *Universities* and ordained by the same *Bishops*, that other ministers were; who came to this country: and Dr. *Mather* calls them "Godly and baptists," and says "Both these have a respectful "character in the churches of this wilderness." *Magnalia*. book [illegible] p. [illegible] Mr. *Miles* was pastor of the first baptist church in the *Massachusetts* province, and liv'd near that which is called *Miles's River* in *Swanzey*. Now the man who gave the *charge* in the first separate ordination at *Mansfield*, had been an ordained elder among the *baptists*; and I suppose there has never been one ordination among us since, without an ordain'd elder to assist in it. So that our apponent will have hard work to prove that our line ever was broken according to his own notion of it; while we have many plain instances of it on his side. Mr. *Fitch* the first minister of *Norwich*, (who was as much accounted of in his day as any minister in that county which Mr. *Fish* belongs to) was ordain'd by the *church*, 40 years after our fathers first came to *Plymouth*.

called by that name, but is called the *feaſt* in the *ſeventh month*. 1 Kin. 8. 2. Yet how remarkable were the tokens which they enjoyed, of God's preſence at that feaſt! Theſe things if rightly viewed, would ſweep off abundance of ſtuff that is brought up in our day, to frighten people from *ſeeing* the truth, or from *acting* upon it when 'tis ſeen.

Dare any pretend that they have equal evidence of the divine preſence in ſprinkling for baptiſm, with what *Iſrael* had at that feaſt? or that any have practiſed it, who equalled *David* for *devotion*, or *Solomon* for *wiſdom*? yet the poor captives who returned from *Babylon* were not deter'd by ſuch great characters, from returning to an exact conformity to divine rule. 4. As the baptiſts are often repreſented as the moſt *rigid* of all ſects, I will briefly touch upon ſome plain evidences to the contrary. The reader may remember how ſhockingly Mr. *Robbins* of *Branford* was treated by the *conſociation* for his preaching among the *baptiſts*. And tho' the ſeparates ſet out, and for ſome years practiſed free communion with the baptiſts, and the bars were broken down, ſo that they were admitted to free and ſucceſsful labors in many baptiſt ſocieties, and they went on comfortably together, 'till by this freedom many were brought into ſuch an acquaintance with the baptiſt principles, as to embrace and practice them; yet that made a great difficulty, and ſeveral were cenſured by churches and councils, for leaving infant baptiſm: upon which many attempts were made for accommodation, 'till at length a baptiſt elder refuſed to act in an ordination with an elder of the other denomination, becauſe he thought that elder had in ſeveral inſtances injured the baptiſts and their principles. This cauſed hard contention between the two elders, and they joined and called all theſe churches together, to hear the affair: which was the largeſt meeting we ever had ſince the beginning of the ſeparation.

The meeting was at *Stonington* on May 29, 1754, where the meſſengers of about 35 churches came together; and labored in conference upon theſe affairs three days; and in the cloſe of the meeting, ſeveral of the moſt noted leaders on the ſide of the pædo-baptiſts openly declared that tho' they could yet commune with ſaints who did *not ſee* light for infant baptiſm; yet they did withdraw the hand of fellowſhip from all ſuch as profeſſed *to ſee* that there was no warrant for bringing infants to that ordinance. And thus the breach appeared before the world to be on that ſide.

And there has lately been a plain inſtance of like nature, among thoſe called ſtanding churches. Mr. *Hezekiah*

kiah Smith, who was educated at *New-Jersey* college, came into *New-England* 4 years ago, with a proposal of only travelling and laboring a while, and then of returning back again: and under this view he was readily received into many pulpits: but a destitute society in *Haverhill* by their pressing importunity, prevailed with him to alter his purpose, and stay with them; and when those ministers who had received him understood that, they turned against him with all their might, and one of them has set forth to the world in print, that when he received him, it was under an expectation that Mr. *S.* would keep his principles concerning baptism "private to himself," and neither *openly* hold them up, nor *practice* them among us. And he reflects very hard upon Mr. *S.* for disappointing that expectation. * But we may boldly appeal to his conscience that he would not call it *charity* nor a *catholic temper*, for another sect to allow him only to *think* for himself, but not to *speak* his thoughts; or if he spake them, yet not to *practice* upon them lest it should offend others. And he who will deny others the liberty which they take themselves; or *judge* and *set at naught* their brethren for taking such liberty: yet the day is *hasting*, when we must all stand before the *judgment seat* of HIM who has *eyes like a flame of fire*.

The Conclusion.

A few lessons of instruction must close the whole.

1. MAY we all learn the importance of *Solomon*'s advice, to *Buy the truth and sell it not*. The end of buying and selling is mutual gain; and he who forsakes all for the *truth as it is in Jesus*, makes great gain to his own soul, and will prove a blessing to others: but they who make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, the whole world can't make up their loss.

2. Let us never imagine to promote the *cause* of truth by any *false methods*. Indeed God will over-rule every thing for his own glory; and in that sense we can do nothing against the truth, but for it: yet let us talk what we may of defending truth, or promoting its cause, if at the same time we advance false arguments, or discover a wrong temper

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* See Mr. Parson's sermons on Act. 16. 33. p. 22.

per and behavior, we thereby contract guilt to ourſelves, and injure our fellow men. *

3. Let none indulge the imagination of being *neuters* in this caſe: for all heaven is engaged *for* truth, and all hell *againſt* it; and this world is *divided* between them; ſo that HE who is the *truth* and the *life*, ſays, He that is not with me, is againſt me; and he that *gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad*. Mat. 12. 30. Therefore tho' many have been at *eaſe from their youth*, and glory in their *ſteadineſs* in the way they were trained up in; and others, *becauſe they* have no *changes*, therefore *fear not God*. (Pſal. 55. 19.) but laugh at the infirmities or calamities of profeſſors; yet they will ſoon find the *reality* of what *truth* declares, even that their *judgment* and *damnation lingereth not*. To be *ſtedfaſt* in the truth, is a weighty matter, but to *change* from error to truth, is of equal importance.

4. Learn what is the real cauſe of all the *diſorders* in the world. As they were firſt introduced by *hearkning* to a *creature* inſtead of the *creator*; ſo the cauſe and nature of all our preſent *diſorders* are the *worſhipping* and *ſerving* the *creature* more than the *Creator*, who is over all, God bleſſed forever. And what higher worſhip can be offered to any being, than to *fix our dependence* upon him for *light* to *direct*, and for *power* to *act*? yet how much have we of *ſuch worſhip*, in a nation where many fancy that both *pagan* and *antichriſtian idolatry* have long been deſtroyed? This work is carried on now, as it was formerly *in the dark; every man in the chambers of his imagery*. Ezek. 8. 12. God is *good*: and every ſoul that knows not the *true good*, has ſome *falſe image* of good ſet up in his mind, which governs

* To give a plain illuſtration of my meaning. I will mention an inſtance which equally cuts both ways. In our former diſputes concerning baptiſm, I heard one advance it as a motive to embrace the baptiſt principles, that thereby providence had opened a door for a releaſe from a burden of taxes: and the ſame day I heard another of equal note ſay, The baptiſt principles might be right, and he did not know but he ſhould conform to them if he liv'd among them, but it would not do to make an *overturn* about it among us. I was then at a loſs in the affair; But this made my ſoul cry, Alas where are we! that *intereſt* ſhould be advanced as an argument, for a principle as truth, and *honour* as an argument againſt it! Each party can readily ſee corruption on the other ſide; yet alas! how little faithful *charity* is exerciſed, to diſtinguiſh between *truth*, and the *corruptions* and *infirmities* of thoſe who profeſs it?

verns his conduct and behavior; * yet their images are often covered ſo artfully, that they ſay, *The Lord ſeeth us not. Peace, order, zeal for the good old way*, and abundance of ſuch fine names are often wrote upon the outſide of this covering; and the great *deceiver* plays a double game thereby; for by this means he *keeps* them which are under this cover, eaſy in a conceit that they *have* religion; and by their evil conduct, he perſuades others that they are as well *without* it as *with* it. Still laboring to keep all their attention fixed, ſome way or other upon the creature, *leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.* 2. Cor. 4. 4.

And whenever the power of God is remarkably diſplayed, to turn men from darkneſs to light, and from the power of ſatan unto God; a loud noiſe is ſoon raiſed about *diſorders, deluſions* and *imprudencies*; and all arts are uſed to blind peoples minds, and to ſettle them back into carnal ſecurity again. And no ſtratagem of the enemy has been more ſucceſsful, than to mix and confound error with truth, in chriſtians experiences, converſation, and conduct: and when their corruptions are diſcovered, ſinners and hypocrites catch at them: for God ſays, They *eat up* the *ſin* of *my people*, and they *ſet their heart on their iniquity*. Hoſ. 4. 8. And the deſtroyer of ſouls would perſuade them, that there is nothing in religion: or if there is ſome reality therein, yet that common people can't diſcern the difference, and therefore muſt be directed by ſuch as know better than they. In order to accompliſh this end, many who would be thought to know much, have often pretended to diſcern diſtinctions, where others can ſee no difference; while things which are really diſtinct in their nature, are confounded together. This wickedneſs has been as wretchedly practiſed by ſome, under the pretence of *ſpiritual teaching*, as it has by others under the name of *great learning*.

It is a fact not to be diſputed, that ſome men know more, and ſee further than others do, both in natural and in ſpiritual things; but when real or pretended knowledge, is uſed to keep others in ignorance, and to exalt a high opinion of themſelves, inſtead of laboring to enlighten and benefit others; that is a certain token of ſuch perſons being enſnared by, if they are not under the full power of, the *wiſdom* which is *from beneath*. For when there is much

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* Mr. *Edwards* has clearly demonſtrated this point, in his *Treatiſe of the will*. Part 2. Sect. 9.

murmuring among the common people, concerning HIM who spake as no mere man ever did: some saying *He is a good man*, others saying, *Nay, but he deceiveth the people*: He was so far from checking their attempt to form a judgment of such matters, that he gave them an infallible rule to judge upon: viz. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness in him.* John 7. 18. But as those who have a *right* to judge, yet many times don't judge *right*; therefore he lays down two important lessons in the affair. One is, not to act as unconcerned *spectators*, but as persons really engaged to *practice* what they know. *If any man will* DO *his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* The other lesson is, not to *judge* in a superficial manner, by the *appearance* and shew which is made, but to *judge righteous judgment*; to search carefully into the truth and reality of things.

Thus the son of God plainly held forth the right which common people ever have to judge, both of the *doctrine* and *conduct* of *teachers*; and the *meek he will guide in judgment*, while those who receive not the *love of the truth*, but have *pleasure in unrighteousness*, are constantly exposed to be given over to *strong delusions*. This being the *order* of Christ's kingdom; hence see what a *disorder* it makes, when common christians are denied the free liberty of examining their teachers, and of acting according to their judgments in the affair; and also that 'tis a great *disorder* to condemn and reproach any teachers, only because they are not owned by *rulers* or *learned ministers*: for by this very rule, our glorious Lord was condemned as a *deceiver*, and his followers stigmatized as *ignorant cursed people*, by men who were as famous in the world's esteem, for *learning*, *devotion*, and *order*, as any in our day, ver. 47—49. Nor is the *disorder* less on the other hand, when any under a pretence of *special teachings*, and *divine influence*, croud their improvements upon those who are not edifyed thereby, and plead their right so to do, because they see further than others, who they say can't discern where they are: tho' (it may be) serious christians *do see* them at the same time, conduct in a *flesh-pleasing* way, and even not providing things *honest in the sight of men.*

Some such *spots* and *blemishes* have caused the greatest disorders that I have ever known among any of our churches

ches; and a principal reaſon of ſome ſuch perſons being left to go on, ſo far as they have in ſuch a way, is fear in humble ſouls of ſpeaking evil (as many have done) of *things they know not*: and we ought always to be cautious in that reſpect, for 'tis like ſhooting in the dark, where we may be as likely to wound a friend as an enemy. What we know to be right, we ought to own, and to diſown what we know to be wrong, and leave other things 'till they are opened to us. But here the caſe is clear, for Chriſt never gave authority to any to crowd upon others; and we are commanded to *ceaſe to hear inſtruction* that cauſeth *to err from the words of knowledge*. Prov. 19. 27. And alſo to *withdraw from every brother that walketh diſorderly*.

It is an important part of *goſpel order*, to have every member encouraged in the improvement of the gifts which are given them; but for any to pretend, they have not ſo far out of ſight of the leaſt ſaint, either by human or divine teachings, that the ſaint can't underſtand them when they properly improve their gifts, is as abſurd as to tell of a *candle ſhining ſo bright as not to give light unto all that are in the houſe*. Mat. 5. 15. The divine direction is, 'Who 'is a *wiſe man*, and endued with *knowledge* among you? 'let him ſhew out of a *good converſation* his works with 'meekneſs *of wiſdom*. But if ye have bitter envying and 'ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the 'truth. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is 'earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh; for where envying and ſtrife 'is, there is *confuſion*, and *every evil work*. But the wiſ-'dom that is from above, is FIRST PURE, *then peaceable*, 'gentle, eaſy to be intreated, *full* of mercy and good fruits, 'without *partiality*, and without *hypocriſy*. And the fruit 'of *righteouſneſs* is ſown in *peace* of them that make peace.'

Appendix.

SOON after Mr. *Fiſh*'s book was put into my hand, I received a ſermon which a gentleman ſent me from the weſtward, intitled, "The holineſs of "infants explained and improved; or, a vindi-"cation of the divine right of chriſtian infants, "to the privileges of the church; and particularly to *bap-"tiſm*, the initiating ſeal of the ſecond covenant, in a ſer-"mon preached at *Woodſtock*, ſecond ſociety, in the colony "of *Connecticut*, to a numerous auditory, Dec. [illegible] 1765. By

"By *Isaac Foster*, V. D. M. paſtor of a church in *Stafford*." Wherein my name is mentioned, and a few ſtrokes are given upon my *letter* to Mr. *Lord*. I ſhall therefore add a brief reply thereto in this place. His text is, 1 Cor. 7. 14. Tho' there is nothing ſaid of *baptiſm* in the text or context, and all the argument turns only upon the term *ſanctified* and *holy*: which words are uſed in three ſenſes in ſcripture. As 1. For *internal* and ſpiritual purity. 2. For the *external* conſecration and ſetting apart of perſons or things to divine worſhip. In this ſenſe the *whole nation* of *Iſrael* were *holy*, as they were ſet apart from all other nations to be God's church; and ſo the *place* and *furniture* for worſhip among them were *holy*, being *devoted* to that uſe, in diſtinction from all their common enjoyments. 3. Theſe words are ſometimes uſed for the *lawful* and *free uſe* of creature comforts, which God grants to his ſaints, while they are going on in a life of *devotedneſs* to him. Thus in a plain prophecy of goſpel privileges and bleſſings it is ſaid, *In that day, ſhall there be upon the bells of the horſes, holineſs unto the Lord;—Yea, every pot in Jeruſalem and in* Judah *ſhall be holineſs unto the Lord of hoſts*, Zech. 14. 20, 21. Which words I ſuppoſe intend the ſame thing that *Paul* expreſſed, in this very epiſtle, (after he had declared that thoſe things were *lawful* to chriſtians which were *unclean* to the Jews,) *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*. 1. Cor. 10. 31. So he ſays in 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. *Every creature of God is good,—for it is ſanctified by the word of God, and prayer*, i. e. His word gives chriſtians a *warrant* to take them, and by prayer they receive a *bleſſing* in the uſe of them.

Now in my letter to Mr. *Lord*, I gave it as my mind, that this third ſenſe of the words *ſanctified* and *holy*, was the true intent of them in the text before us: and that the *Corinthians* writing to the apoſtle upon this affair (ver. 1.) was doubtleſs occaſioned by their reading in Ezra 10. 3. That the *Jews* were obliged to *put away all the wives, and ſuch as were born of them*, which they had taken of other nations, that were not of their religion: which might naturally cauſe an enquiry, whether they muſt do ſo now or not? And the anſwer is in the negative, for the unbelieving mate is *ſanctified*, and their children *holy*. And Mr. *Foſter* entirely concurs with my ſenſe of the occaſion of the words, and alſo as to the meaning of the word *ſanctified*; but he would have the word *holy* taken in the ſecond ſenſe which was given above; and the only reaſon that he gives

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for differing from me in that respect p. 8. is, "That the "unbelieving party is not said to be sanctified [illegible] relation "to God, but only in relation to the believing [illegible]ke-fel- "low." But he says, children are holy, "not [illegible]elation "to any other but God only."

Upon which I would observe, that 'tis very [illegible]dent in the text, that the childrens being holy, is the [illegible] of the parents being sanctified, so that here we are prese[illegible] with a number of absurdities. As 1. an *effect* which [illegible] above its *cause*. 2. With a case of conscience, which [illegible] occasioned by a text in *Ezra*, that obliged the *Jews* to [illegible] away their *wives*, and such as were *born of them*, as [illegible]*ly unclean*; and yet the answer to it is declared, to [illegible] something *higher* in the child than in the parent it sp[illegible] from. For Mr. *Foster* says, the unbelieving parents bei[illegible] destitute of the sanctifying graces of the holy spi[illegible] God, "are unfit for communion with him." p. 5. [illegible]n the same page after saying, "The children of belie[illegible] are as "others, born in sin, and by *nature* children of [illegible]th;" he goes on to say, "They are visibly sanctified, [illegible]g set "apart for God:" and declares, "It is such a san[illegible]ration "or holiness as is intended, when the church an[illegible] people "of *Israel* are called holy; Psal. 50. 5. Gather [illegible] *saints* "together unto me, those that have made a cov[illegible]t with "me by sacrifice." Here *old sinners* are declared [illegible]e *unfit* for communion with God, while 'tis asserted [illegible] *young ones* who are *born in sin*, are set apart for him [illegible]. We have a *self-contradiction*; for in p. 4. Mr. *Fo*[illegible] referring to Ezra 10. 3. says, "'Tis just that those a[illegible]s that "are done against *law*, should be accounted no[illegible]y *un*- "*lawful*, but *null*.—But it was otherwise wi[illegible]ose to "whom the apostle wrote; for they were *lawfu*[illegible]an and "wife; their marriage not being *prohibited*, t[illegible] might "not be *parted*, and their children not unclean, [illegible]oly." Yet in page 7 when he is opposing Dr. *Gill*, he sa[illegible] "The "question propounded by the *Corinthians*, was [illegible] whe- "ther a believing husband and unbelieving [illegible] were "*lawful* man and wife together? No body *doub*[illegible]*that*."

However I will not waste paper, nor abuse th[illegible]eader with remarks upon all the stuff which his sermon [illegible]ounds with; but would just observe, that the new-testa[illegible]nt certainly gives the same sense of these terms, *sanctified* and holy, else where, as we do here; and those who [illegible]ve the other sense of them are forced, all of them, to [illegible]row it from the *national church* in the old testament; [illegible] Mr.

Foster

Foſter ſays, "I freely own that I know no other difference, "betwixt a national church and a congregational church, "but one is great, and the other little." p. 20. If all would come out ſo plain, we ſhould hope to ſee the controverſy ſoon brought to an iſſue: for the firſt conſtitution of the national church, in *Abraham's houſhold*, is very expreſs; the *covenant* included every *man-child* that was *born in his houſe, and bought with his money of the ſtranger*. Theſe were all in that covenant, and therefore were to have the *token* of it adminiſtred upon them. *Circumciſion* did not bring them into covenant; natural birth or purchaſe brought them in, and being in, if there was one ſoul of them that continued without the token of the covenant, God ſaid, *That ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant*. Gen. 17. 13, 14, 27. And when the *paſſover* was inſtituted in that church, the Lord ſaid, *every man's ſervant that is bought for money, when thou haſt circumciſed him*, THEN *ſhall he eat thereof*. Exod. 12. 44.

No words could be more plain than theſe are, to deſcribe the exact limits of the national church; yet Mr. *Dickinſon* aſſerts, that the patent ſealed by baptiſm, is "The very "ſame *parchment* that was given to *Abraham*:" and Mr. *Fiſh* and *Foſter* concur in the ſame ſenſe. But if ſo, then out of their own mouths they are condemned; for inſtead of excluding *half* the ſubjects, as they tell us of, they exclude more than a *hundred* to *one*. *Abraham*, before this, had 118 ſervants, *born in his own houſe*, who were fit for *ſoldiers*. Gen. 14. 14. And *in the ſelf-ſame day* that this covenant was made with him, he *circumciſed his ſon* and ALL *the* MEN *of his houſe*. Here was but *one* of his *own ſeed* to ſuch a great *houſhold*, (but now their plea is, only for little children.) And if we view the antitype, we may ſee as plain a deſcription of the goſpel church. *Paul* ſhews to the *Epheſians*, that Chriſt had *broken down the middle wall of partition between* them and the *Jews*, and came and *preached peace* to both, whereby their *enmity was ſlain*; and *thro' him they both had acceſs by one ſpirit unto the Father*, and were *fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the* HOUSHOLD OF GOD; *and were built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone*, Eph. 2. 14—20

Now if Mr. *Foſter* knows of no other difference between theſe two churches but only what reſpects their *number*, I would deſire him to go to ſchool with *Nicodemus*, and learn the difference betwixt being *born of the fleſh*, and a being

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born of the ſpirit. In my letter, I had obſerved that the *oracles of God* were *committed to the Jews*, and by no means were uſed for the converſion of members *within* the church: whereas now, the goſpel is freely *preached to all nations*, and the *lively ſtones*, which are the materials of his *ſpiritual houſe*, which is the antitype of *Solomon's* temple, are *prepared without*, before they are *builded together for an habitation of God thro' the ſpirit.* Upon which Mr. *Foſter* gives ſeveral cants, and ſays, he knows not what I mean, unleſs it is, "That there is now no means "uſed for the "converſion of members within the church." p. 21.

But if the obſerving this difference, that the means for converſion were *confined within* the *jewiſh* church, which are now *freely uſed* with others who are *without* the chriſtian church, can convey *no other* meaning in it than that there are *no means* uſed for converſion within the church; then I deſpair of ever conveying any juſt ideas to mankind! However, when we ſee how this man leaves his own meaning, we ſhall not wonder at this treatment of others; for upon my ſaying that *Paul* takes much pains to keep *Abraham's* natural and ſpiritual ſeed diſtinct, he ſays, "*Abra-*"*ham* never had a ſpiritual ſeed, nor no other man, the "man Jeſus Chriſt excepted." p. 24. And proves it ſo. Now whether he thinks, *Oneſimus* whom *Paul* had *begotten in his bonds*, was his *natural* or *ſpiritual ſon* I know not; neither ſhall I detain my reader, any further than to correct two ſtories which this writer has publiſhed.

In warning the people of *Woodſtock* of their teacher, Mr. *Foſter* ſays, "By going after thoſe who are now cauſing "diviſions and ſeparations among you, and conforming at "their wicked doctrines and practices, you will be in dan-"ger of falling into ſuch errors, and embracing ſuch opi-"nions, as will render your ſalvation altogether hopeleſs." p. 28. Then after allowing that there were ſome ſober baptiſts in the land 20 years ago, he ſays, "As to our pre-"ſent ſeparate baptiſts, 'tis well known that in opinion and "practice, they are notoriouſly bad, and ſeem daily grow-"ing worſe. Witneſs Dr. *Davis's* book, which ſo far as "I can underſtand, is generally liked among them. This "man was as famous a baptiſt preacher as any in the "country a few years ago, and what he is now come to, "his book will ſhow, in which he blaſphemouſly attributes "all conviction of ſin to the Devil." p. 29.

This I perceive was delivered from the preſs, which makes me think of Dr. *Franck's* ſaying, that he who hears

ſuch

ſuch a railer does not hear Chriſt, but the devil himſelf; for what could that *accuſer* ſay more falſe than this is! The paſtor of the baptiſt church in *Stafford*, informed me ſome years ago of one *Davis* a phyſician, who was caſt out of that church, for broaching antinomian errors; and that he publiſhed a ſmall pamphlet upon them afterward: but I never ſaw the man nor his book, and 'tis ſo far from being "generally liked among" our churches, that very few have ever ſeen his book, and Mr. *Foſter* may be boldly challenged to produce an inſtance if he can of one member in the baptiſt church in *Woodſtock*, or any church which they hold fellowſhip with, who like or will countenance the horrid principle he ſpeaks of.

The other ſtory concerns *Wookſtock* in particular. Mr. *Foſter* ſays, "I am informed that not long ſince, there was "a hopeful proſpect of the revival of ſerious godlineſs "among you; that a number of perſons in this place, ap- "peared ſeriouſly and ſuitably concerned about the great "things of God and religion, and were enquiring the way "to Zion, with their faces thither ward; but no ſooner "did theſe men, like a deſtroying flood, come in among you, "but they flung all into confuſion, as you ſee this day, and "in a moment daſhed all your hopes of a revival of god- "lineſs amongſt you." p. 33. 34.

Now the plain ſtate of their caſe, as I have it from good authorities, is briefly thus. Vanity and extravagance, eſpecially among young people in that place, had greatly prevailed: 'till a young man, who had been a ringleader in frolicking, happened to hear a *baptiſt* elder preach, in Dec. 1763. which was bleſt as a means of his *awakening*, and he continued under *conviction* 'till the next *March*, and then was brought out of darkneſs into marvellous light; whereupon four of his old companions came one evening, to try to get him back to his former way; but inſtead of that, two of them were ſeized under *conviction*; and they were moved to ſet up religious meetings, inſtead of their former frolicks; which meetings in a few weeks increaſed to ſeveral hundreds; and theſe meetings which were carried on by prayer, ſinging, reading, and mutual exhortation, were made a happy means of the awakening and hopeful converſion of a conſiderable number. And tho' they gladly improved occaſional opportunities of hearing baptiſt elders, yet they ſtill attended the pariſh meeting, 'till the miniſter there, upon a faſt which was appointed for the purpoſe, got ſome neighbouring miniſters to labour to regulate them:

them: who plainly warned them against the first instruments of their awakening, as being the *deceivers* which should come in the last times. And they evidently set up the same standard that we have seen so much of before, of *measuring themselves by themselves*, so as to reason all off for *delusion*, which interfered with the order and honor of the old ministers and churches as they stood.

But for young converts to hear, the instrument and nature of that work, which turn'd them from vanity to love Christ, treated at such a rate, it only served to convince them that the ministers who treated things at that rate, were wrong; and so finally caused a separation from them, and a baptist church was gathered in that place. The former part of this account I had from the mouth of the young man who was first awakened there, and in the presence of one of the two young men who were converted by him; and the rest I have had attested by many substantial evidences.

I leave the reader to make his own remarks; and shall only observe that this author has intermixed with these slanders, some quotations of the most *bitter* sentences against the baptists, that he could find in the antient fathers; it makes me think of a saying of one of the *old Martyrs*, "Alas! says he, such is the wickedness of these "our last days, that nothing moves us!—Neither the "pure doctrine, the godliness of life, nor good example of "the antient fathers.—If in any thing they erred, that "will their charitable children embrace, *publish* and maintain with sword, faggot and fire: but in vain they strive "against the stream; for tho' in despite of the truth by "force of the ears of crafty persuasion, they may bring "themselves into the haven of *hell*; yet can they not "make all men believe that the banks move, when the "ship saileth, nor ever shall be able to turn the direct "course of the stream of God's truth."

Sufferers mirrour Vol. I. p. 103.

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ERRATA.

TITLE page r. Dr. Owens Eschol. p. 4. l. 6. fr. bot. [illegible] to di[illegible]. p. 13. l. 12. fr. bot. r. were. p. 14. l. 14. fr. bot. [illegible]estions p. 15. l. 2. r. any church. p. 16. marg. r. 1 John 9. 10 [illegible] 19. l. 2. r. apostacy. p. 23. These words at the end of the se[illegible] paragraph, *while we are represented as proud rebels for not o[illegible]g them as such*, should have been in the marg. note after the w[illegible] *Aaron.* l. first of the note r. was. l. 4. fr. bot. omit to r. not. p[illegible] marg. note. r. witnesses. last l. r. Acts 1. 8. & 6. 3. p. 25. l[illegible] r. bot. add, is. l. 22. r. way. p. 26. l. 22. r. might be. p. 37[illegible] 9. fr. bot. r. confessed. p. 42. l. 12. after the word Tutors, p[illegible] period. l. 4. of marg. note. r. the power. p. 46. in the note Mr. [illegible]s name should be placed opposite to the word judgment. p. 50. [illegible] r. lie. l. 2. fr. bot. r. are. p. 51. l. 8. r. or of. p. 53 l. 4. r. [illegible] p. 58. l. 16. r. to have been. p. 64. l. 20. dele for. p. 71. l. [illegible] could not. p. 82. l. 6. fr. bot. r. these words. p. 86. l. 35. r. [illegible]in all. p. 89. l. 21. r. known. p. 90. l. 2. for those. r. such. [illegible]fr. bot. r. have been. p. 92. l. 13. r. confessed. p. 100. l. 5. [illegible]ear. p. 110. l. 11. for licenced. r. silenced. l. 14. fr. bot. for [illegible] r. 114. p. 112. l. 14. fr. bot r. striking. p. 115. l. 18. fr. bot [illegible]hat. p. 127. l. 22. for no. r. any.